

47th edition
Patterns

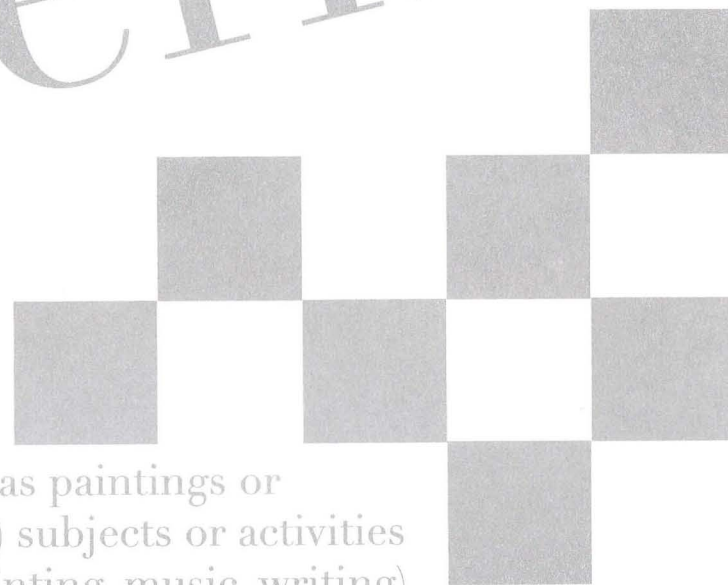


Creativity defined

write v. (wrote, written, writing) 1 make letters or other
symbolson a surface, esp. with a pen or pencil. 2 compose
in written formesp. for publication. 3 be an author. 4
write and send a letter.

Patterns

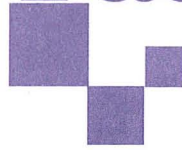
47th edition



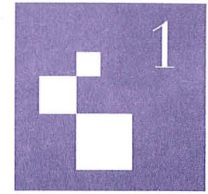
art n. 1 creative skill, works such as paintings or
sculpture produced by this. 2 (pl.) subjects or activities
concerned with creativity (e.g. painting, music, writing).
3 aptitudeor knack.

Creativity defined

Patterns 47th edition



April 2005

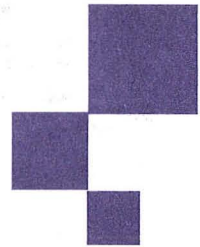


We'll preface this edition of Patterns with a brief trumpeting of our own horn [sound effect: fanfare]. We proudly announce that last year's 46th edition of Patterns was awarded First Place in the Central Division of the CCHA Literary Magazine Competition (the Central Division includes eleven U.S. states and all of Canada). And since we've temporarily thrown modesty to the four winds, we'll add that, from 1994 through 2004, Patterns received no less than six CCHA awards, ranging from an Honorable Mention in 2002 to another First Place award in 1998.

This year's edition looks to be at least as strong as its predecessors. We're honored to have the input of our two visiting judges (through the munificence of the Michigan Council of the Arts), authors Carla Harryman of Wayne State University and John DuVal of the University of Arkansas. We are also very happy to benefit from the expertise of a new faculty advisor to Patterns, John Olson, who brings his considerable background in publishing, layout and design to our assistance. Above all, we are honored to once again enjoy the creative work of some of the top students on our campus; this year's edition will be a strong one mainly due to the excellence of the student writing and artwork within these pages. Since its inception, Patterns has been dedicated to presenting the best of each year's creative work by our students, and it is interesting to note the way that each issue reflects the particular character of the student writers and artists of that term. Just a few years ago, the poets dominated the literary contents, last year it was the essayists who made the strongest showing (so much so, in fact, that the Eleanor Mathews Award, traditionally given to the superior overall writer was set last year to distinguish the top essay writer of a large contingent—this year the Mathews Award returns to its traditional role), and in the 47th edition the fiction writers have emerged as the most notable writers in this cohort.

We the editors of Patterns congratulate all the writers and artists whose work is included in these pages. Thank you for helping to make this issue happen.

Preface



Patterns 47th edition

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Visiting Authors/Judges

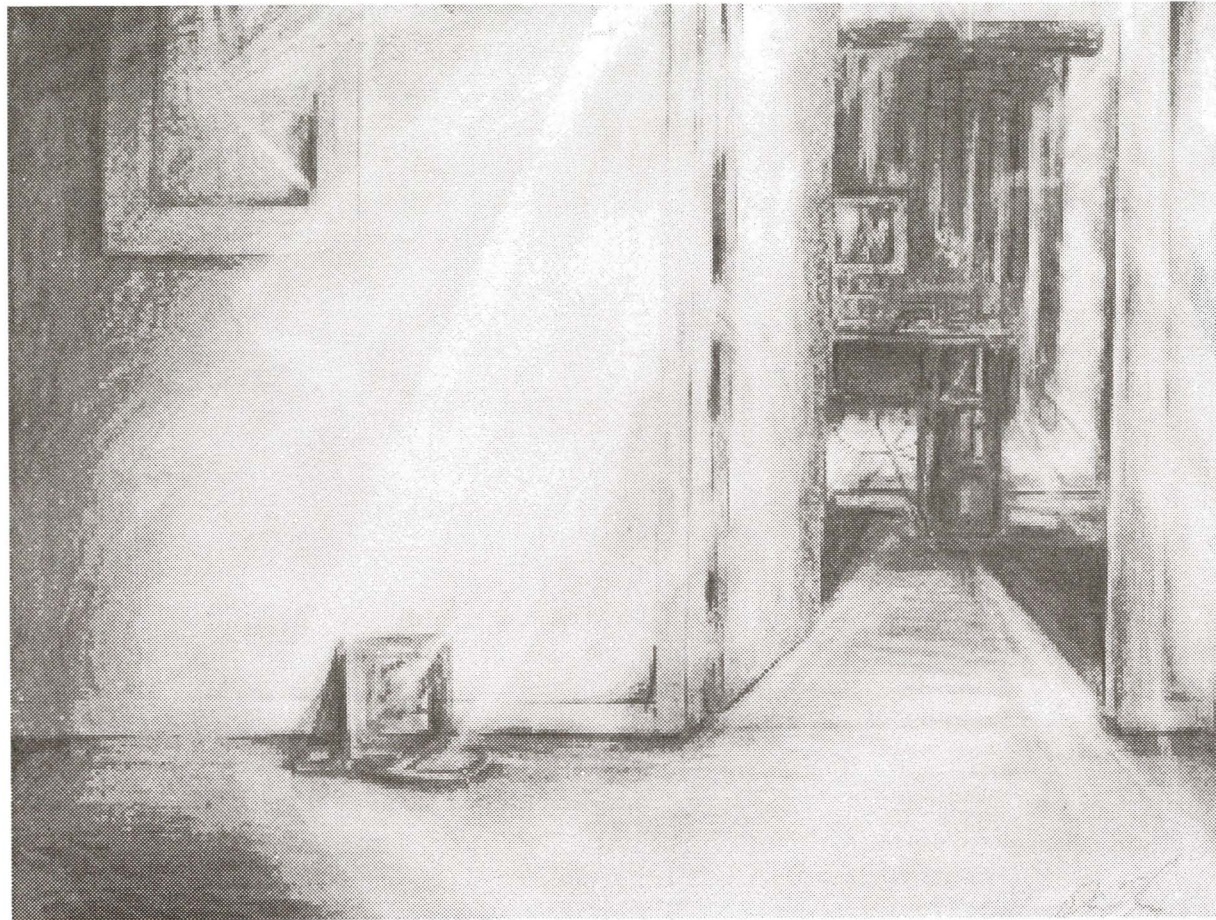
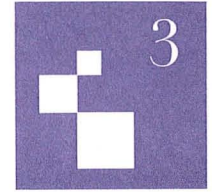
creativity defined

Carla Harryman is the author of numerous books of poetry, fiction, plays, and essays. Her most recent work includes *Baby*, a collection of prose poems forthcoming for *Adventures in Poetry* (New York/Boston), and a play for one performer, *Mirror Play*, which premiered at New Langton Arts in San Francisco in April, 2004. Other writings include *There Never Was a Rose Without a Thorn* (City Lights, 1995), a selection of prose poetry and experimental fiction and the experimental novel *Gardener of Stars* (Atelos, 2001). Her work is widely anthologized; poems and essays have appeared recently in *Great American Prose Poems from Poe to the Present* (Scribners 2003) and in *Assembling Alternatives* (Wesleyan University Press, 2003). Her writing has also appeared in translation in magazines, journals, and anthologies in Spanish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Croatian. Recent essays have focused on the innovations of American novelist Kathy Acker and Canadian novelist Gail Scott; the plays and operas of Gertrude Stein; and on performance liveness and social space. She is currently writing on performance, poetry, and radicality in the works of two UK artists, *cris cheek*, and Linton Kwesi Johnson. In addition to writing and teaching, she has been an innovator of, and advocate for, poets theater and has worked for many years in interdisciplinary art and experimental theater. In fall 2003, she was a visiting artist at the Consortium for the Arts, University of California, Berkeley while staging the San Francisco production of her play, *Performing Objects Stationed in the Sub World*.

John DuVal directs the Literary Translation Program at the University of Arkansas. His *Cockolds, Clerics, and Countrymen* was selected by Choice as an Outstanding Academic Book for 1982. In 1992 the Academy of American Poets honored him with the Harold Morton Landon Award for his translation of Cesare Pascarella's *The Discovery of America*. He received a year 2000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for his translation of Adam le Bossu's *Greenwood Follies*, one of the seven Old French verse plays in his and Raymond Eichmann's *From Adam to Adam*, scheduled for publication by Pegasus Paperbooks in December, 2004. His most recent book of translation, another Pegasus Paperbook with Raymond Eichmann, is *Fabliaux Fair and Foul*, which will be reissued for the second time in the summer of 2005, this time as an expanded edition.

First Place Art

Discovering the Unknown



Philip Scally

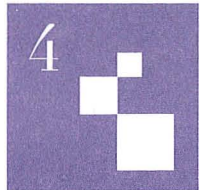


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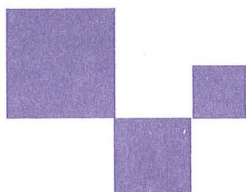
First Place

Second Place

Third Place

Honorable Mention

Selection of Merit



Title

Discovering the Unknown

My Maple Tree

Music Poster

Isolated

Off-balance

Untitled

Getting Closer to the Person

The Light of the Sea

Lo Siento, Lo Mismo

Untitled

Untitled

East Meets West 2

East Meets West 3

Follicles of My Identity

Paradigm Shift

Chairs in the Dark

Turtle King, Boo!, VoodooMajik

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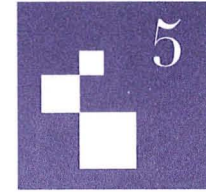
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Writing



Eleanor B. Mathews Award

Essay

First Place

Second Place

Selection of Merit

Poetry

Kathleen Nickerson Award

First Place

Second Place

Selection of Merit

Short Story

Richard J. Colwell Award

First Place

Second Place

Selection of Merit

Title

Jewett's Legacy

An Inner Salvation

Faulkner's Nancy

Persnickety

Here Where the Day is Always Dying

That Girl on Vernon Street

Smoke Screen

The Moon

You

Temptress

Still Here

Still Standing

Infectious

An Ode to Poetry

Agoraphobia

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My Friend Alice

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Wally Horsey

Grace Vermeer

Christine Basney

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Grace Vermeer

Heather Wright

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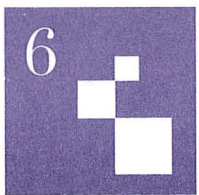
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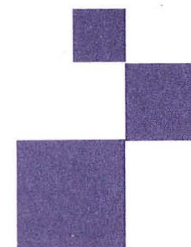
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Rebecca Cornejo

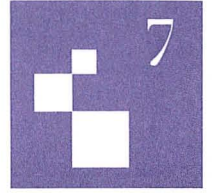


Second Place Art

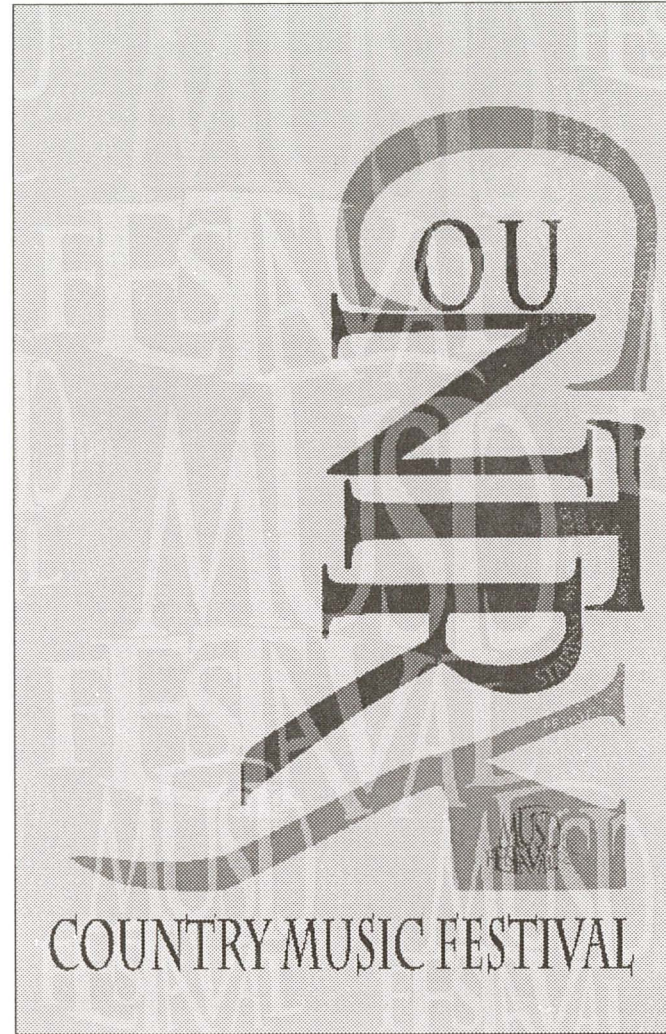
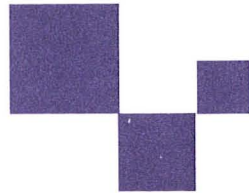
My Maple Tree

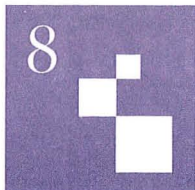


Third Place Art Music Poster



Christine Shumate

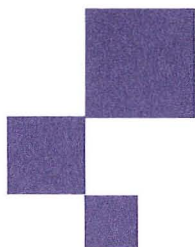


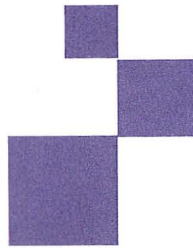


Patrick Bourke fine arts award

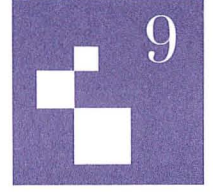
Seth Gilbert came to the college from Port Huron High School to continue his adventure with ART. And continue he did but his plan wasn't clearly defined because there were so many options. In Design class he confessed that he really wanted to be a Fashion Designer. When asked if he could operate a sewing machine – the answer was “of course.” In Drawing class he found that his creative ideas plunged him into a world of illusion and all of this with some paper and a few sticks of chalk. Seth came into the Art Department to concentrate on his visual skills, but he was also enthusiastic about helping whomever with whatever throughout the building. He built still-lives for drawing and painting classes – one a complete table setting with cloth, china, the works, all commandeered by Seth for the sake of “Art.” He shared his food, worried about his friends and has been a constant resource for ideas and materials for everyone in the Fine Arts Building. He's in the first thing in the morning and the last student to leave at night - still smiling. “Of course I can do that.” “Do you need help with this?”

It was curiosity and his generous nature which ultimately landed Seth in the college's Theatre Discipline. After all Fashion Design and Costume Design both need vision, drawing and a sewing machine and he had it all and he was there. The Theatre Discipline was in a transitional period and was building its own costume shop. Then with Seth's interest and recruitment zeal, suddenly there was a new course in Costume Design. For the college's winter show “Having a Wonderful Time Wish You Were Her,” Seth Gilbert was credited with the Design and production of the costumes. Here in the world of theatre Seth found Design application and as Design Ambassador for the Visual & Performing Arts Department, he has found his vocation. Now, when he's asked where he is going – he smiles and says I'm off to university to explore the world of Costume Design. We all wish him well and wait for the program credits and the rave reviews.

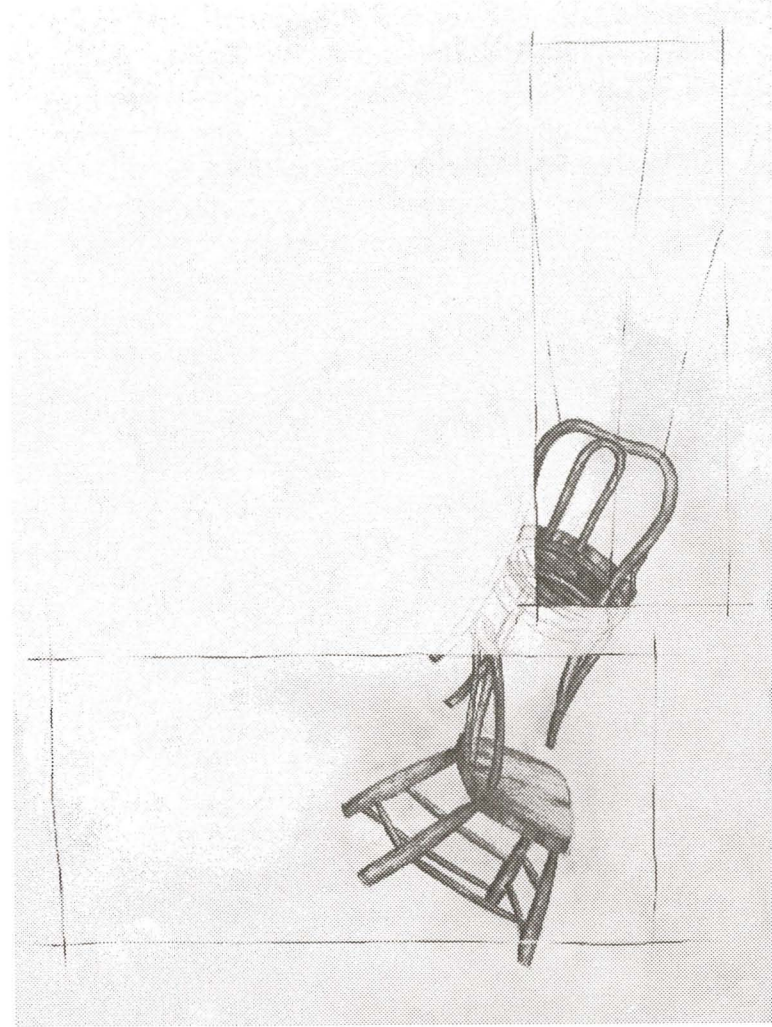




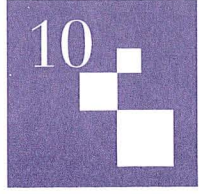
Off-balance



Seth Gilbert



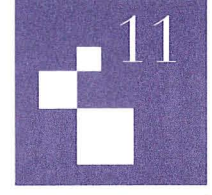
Jeffrey Solliday



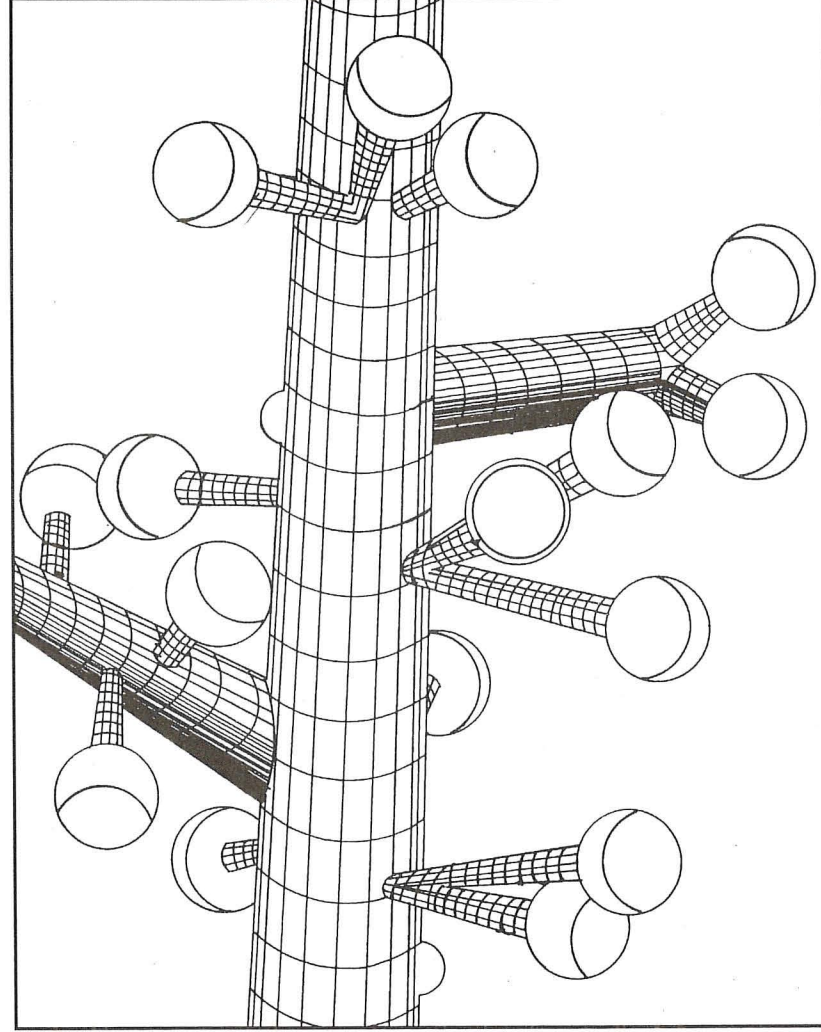
Honorable Mention Isolated



Untitled



Carrie West



First Place Poetry

That Girl on Vernon Street

"The Girl on Vernon Street" is an engaging and smart poem. With economy, the poet uses fable, fairy tale, and intertextual sources to convey a psychological allegory of desire within the context of family injury.

I knew a girl on Vernon Street.
Her small bird-like mother
had a wide hungry sorrow
that stretched its neck
and opened its mouth,
looking for something
to swallow.

Her sighs were barbed lures,
spiny red hooks;
with miniature jerks,
she pulled the girl closer
and said, "Come, let me gently
grind your bones
and knead them into bread.
I'll count each crumb
and swallow them,
oh, so tenderly."

The girl turned fourteen.
At the bus stop she met
a shy, awkward boy
with brown eyes and freckles.
He lent her his books:
Moby Dick,
Great Expectations.
He taught her to paint
landscapes, told stories
about Georgia O'Keeffe,

Picasso, Van Gogh.
The following October,
when he was not yet a man,
he touched her face
and said, "Do you know
that I love you?"

"Go away," cried the girl. "There's something
about you that frightens me."

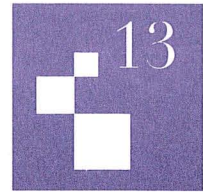
At the bus stop
she tripped over
a brown-eyed constrictor.
He even had freckles.
"Have we met?" said the snake.
"I don't know," said the girl. "There is
something
about you that seems awfully familiar."
"Come," said the boa. "I have a plan.
Let me gently squeeze your bones.
I'll count each rib.
I'll take you home
and swallow you,
oh, so tenderly."

"Ah," said the girl,
"You're just who I've been waiting for."

Second Place Poetry

Smoke Screen

"Smoke Screen," a conceptual graphic poem, whose roots are in the tradition of concrete poetry, deftly lays bare the devises and deceits of advertising.



SMOKE SCREEN

carbon monoxide hidden in a

SMOOTH RICH TASTE

cancerous tar disguised as

FULL FLAVOR TOBACCO

emphysema and heart disease a

LONG LASTING

EXPERIENCE

poisonous arsenic rolled into

YOUR SMOKING

ENJOYMENT

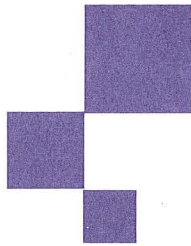
deadly second hand smoke is

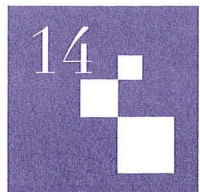
AN INHALING PLEASURE

yellowed wrinkled skin

STIRS THE SENCES

Heather Wright





Kathleen Nickerson Award

Here Where the Day is Always Dying

*Kathy Nickerson Award for Excellence in Poetry
(formerly the Blanche Redman Poetry Award)*

"Here Where the Day is Always Dying" is a confident lyric poem that invokes a large context for personal sorrow and awakening to spiritual, or philosophical, structures of feeling.

Here where the day is always dying,
my father sits and gazes at the sky
streaked with vermilion, orange and gold.
My brothers and I squeeze beside him
on the porch swing. I am six years old.
We sing hymns from Don MacNeil's
Family Album. The whip-poor-will calls
near the edge of the woods, crickets chirp,
cicadas buzz. The wooden swing creaks
back and forth on its rusty springs.

The fiery orange lingers, fades and sinks,
the wide sky shrinks to indigo,
the shadows creep from the tall deep woods
and steal across the freshly mowed field.
My father sings my favorite hymn—
Wait and worship while the night
sets her evening lamps alight
through all the sky. Holy, holy, holy.

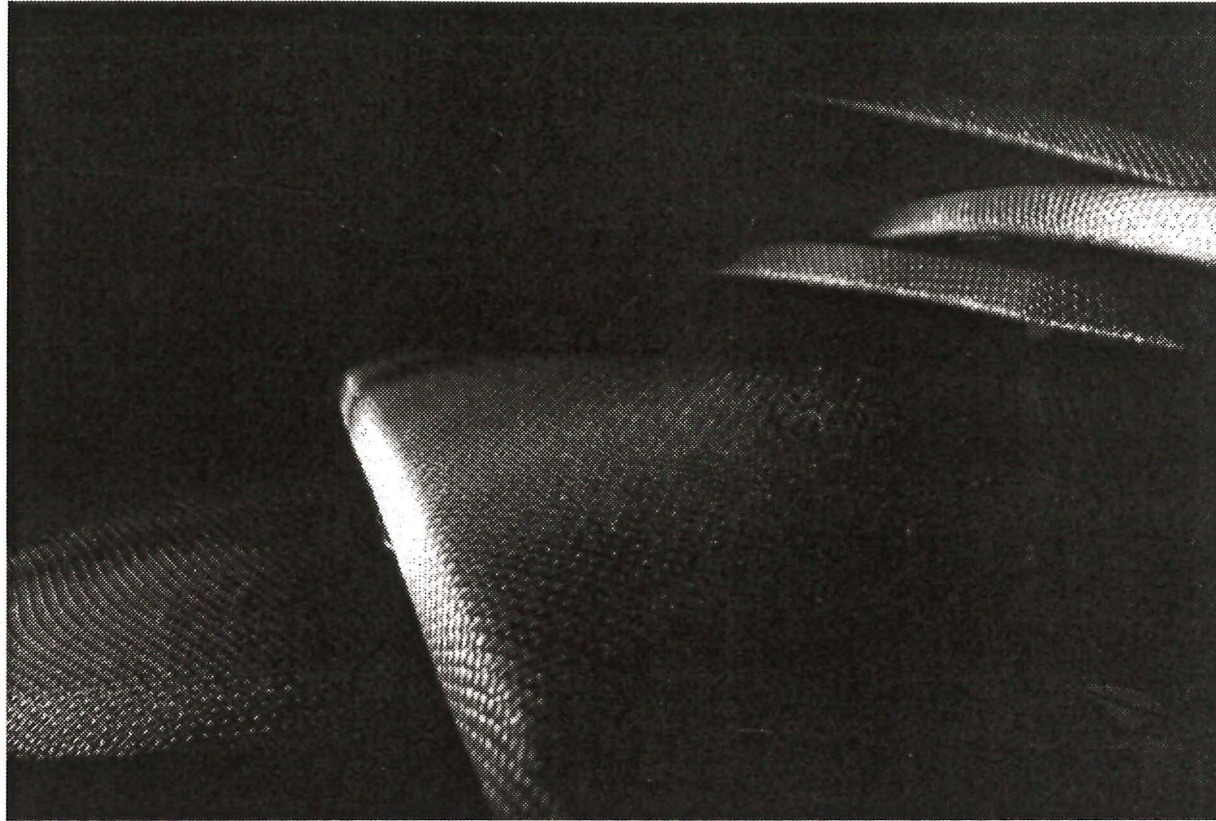
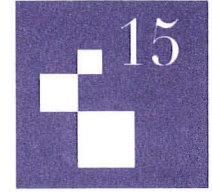
As he sang, I knew the day was dying.
No words he craved or sang or prayed

could keep the holiness from fading.
He sang us up into the wild night sky;
we flew with cracked and fragile wings.
I knew that we were falling.
We plunged through black and broken skies,
past exploding planets, and still my father
cried—
"The light is holy, holy, holy."

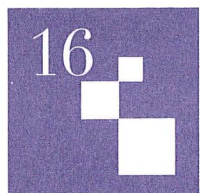
Did he know he was a falling star?
One brief twinkle
extinguished
in a wild
and anguished
indigo.

Selection of Merit

Getting Closer to the Person



Philip Scally



Selection of Merit

The Moon

The moon drives by,
cool and white
in her funeral-black car.
She climbs
her ebony stairs
with wide, unblinking eyes
to view the slaughtered earth.
A cold
and lonely howl
that rips the throat
and will not stop
rises to her ears.

The moon glides by.

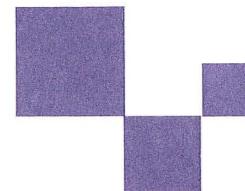
Should she pause
and watch
Jiang Zongxiu die,
slumped beside that concrete wall?

The moon has no more tears.

She's howled
and screamed,
fallen on the iron skies,
clawed her wild, astonished eyes,
writhed
and wailed.

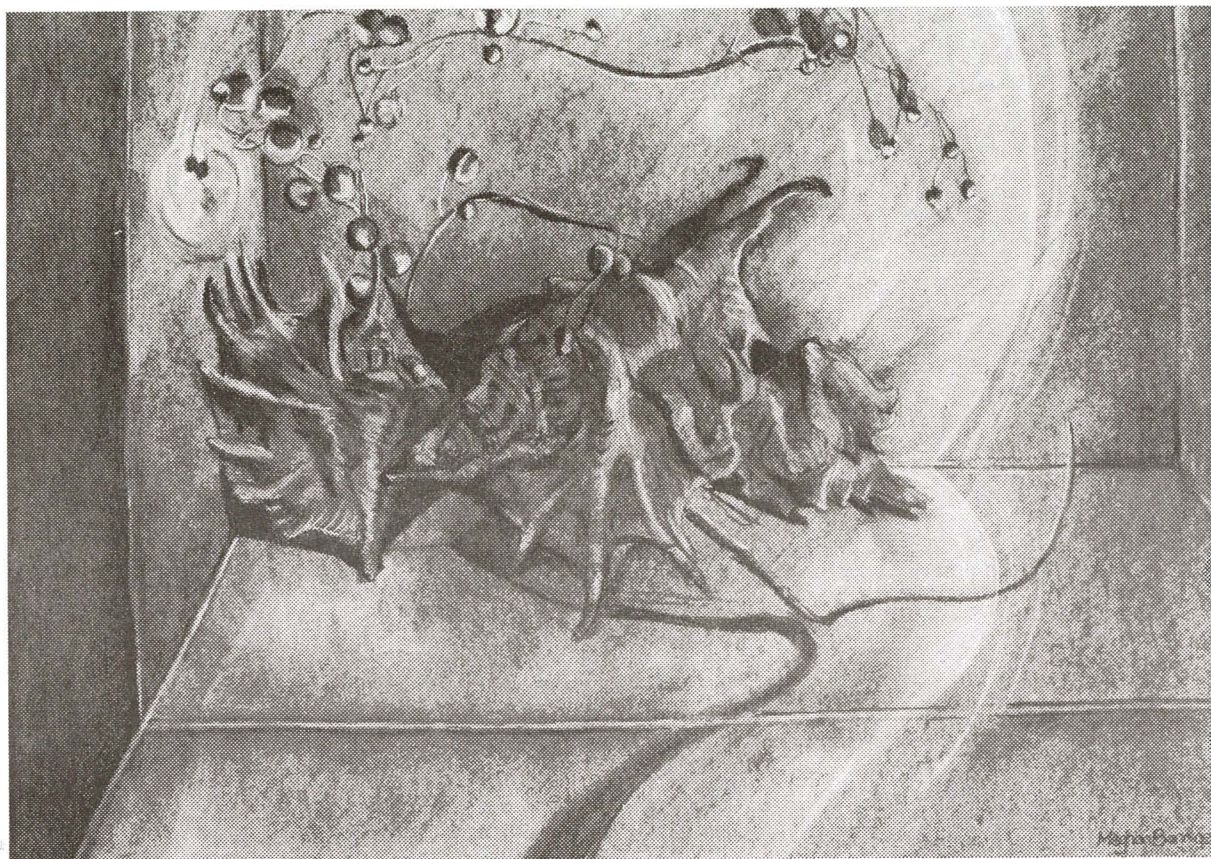
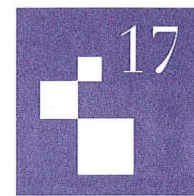
The moon has seen too much.

Each night she swears
she'll never look again.



Selection of Merit

The Light of the Sea



Meghan Barriger

Selection of Merit

You

I have heard stories;

Stories of how spontaneous
you
are, the gifts that
you
have surprised girls with, and
your
eagerness to shower them with compliments.

I have heard rumors;

Rumors of how clever
you
are, the challenging classes
you
are taking in school, and all of the poetic recognition
you
have earned.

I have heard talk;

Talk of how attractive
you
are, the sexy grin that
you
have, and the intensity of
your
green eyes.

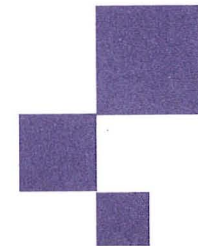
I have heard conversation;

Conversation of how gifted
you
are,
your
talent for playing guitar, and the people begging
you
to play for them.

I have heard it all:

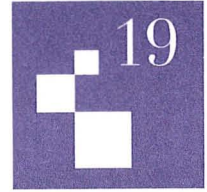
your amazing qualities,
your passion for words,
your numerous talents,
your big heart...

I have heard it all
and I am sure of it all,
'cause I have heard it all from
you.



Selection of Merit

Temptress



I am your Temptress, enticing you to call in
sick, play hooky

I have many masters, but only you can untie
my lines, start me up.

Ignore your responsibilities and step aboard,
sailor

Release me into the endless waters and forget
yourself

At this moment nothing else matters

Only you, the water and the wind, my masters

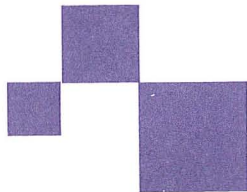
Longing to taste the wind, I cry, "Raise my
sails"

Full of life, my sails stretch out across the sky

Gentle currents murmuring softly

We sail into silence

Heather Wright

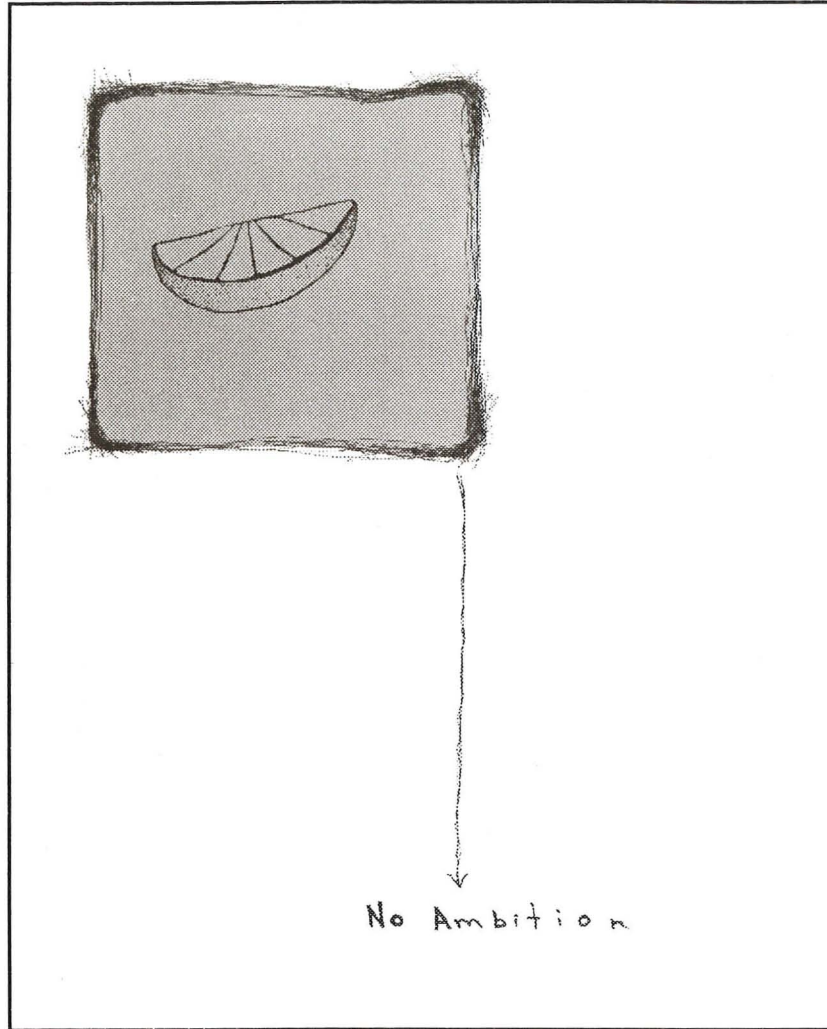


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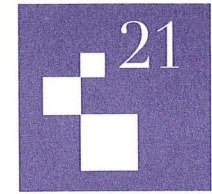
C.A. McKenzie

Selection of Merit

Lo Siento, Lo Mismo



Selection of Merit
Still Here



Standing wrapped in your embrace,
I let my head fall to rest
on your shoulder.

I hold my eyes tightly shut.

Your warm breath caresses my skin
As your lips brush my neck.

The pulsing in my chest intensifies
As we sway in the silence.

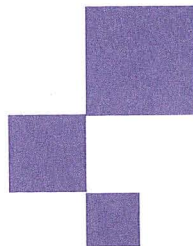
Slowly, I open my eyes.

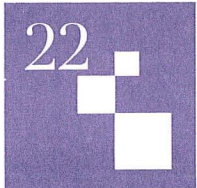
Peering into our bedroom mirror,
I am held still by its reflection.

A single tear trickles down my face
At the sight of myself...

Alone.

Amy Clark





Amy Clark

Selection of Merit

Still Standing

I stare into your closed eyes;
Deep blue surrounds their edges.

Your soul has become a vacant lot,
Awaiting an interested buyer.

I recognize your blank stare from that day,
But you do not remember me.

I hear you cry in the night.
As wind whips outside,
I hear moans of loneliness escape your
cracked,
Chapped lips.

Your aging face tells of your years of abuse.
Mystery is etched in the creases of your
exterior;
Secrets swarm behind closed doors.

And yet, I used to know you.
I could sit before you in silence.
Your presence brought me contentment.

But now you are old and worn out;
Your tired face leaves you unwanted and
abandoned.

There is not a single sign of life in you;
I watched as the light in your eyes flickered
out
As he swung at you,
For the last time.

That was the day they packed my bags,
And I left you alone.

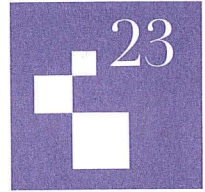
I had no choice.

Now trying to peer passed pulled shades
And get passed locked doors,
I find nothing but loneliness,
Empty space and creaking boards
Beneath my feet.

You have been dead since the last time I left,
And yet,
You are still standing.

Selection of Merit

Infectious



Amy Clark

Words warp themselves around chair legs,
Creeping their way to students' ears
To mutter their purpose.

"Kim is a slut" and "Josh is gay" pollute the
rafters of the highest
Ceilings, falling one by one
To rest upon their shoulders.

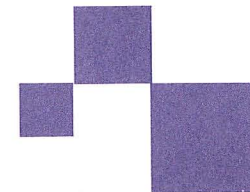
"Dan cheated on Sara" and "Ross beat up
Seth" litter the walls,
Held there from years
Passed. They multiply.

Students find "Mike gets high every night"
and "Julie's pregnant"
On lunch tables
And behind bookshelves.

"Tim stole from Jon" and "Mr. Cobb is dating
Miss Russell" collect
On worn-out books
And are zipped into book bags.

They will take "Jake's dad beats him" and
"Tony's in jail" with them
On their clothes
And stuck to the soles of their shoes.

Words flow through students' veins.
They feed off their minds
And penetrate open wounds. They infect.

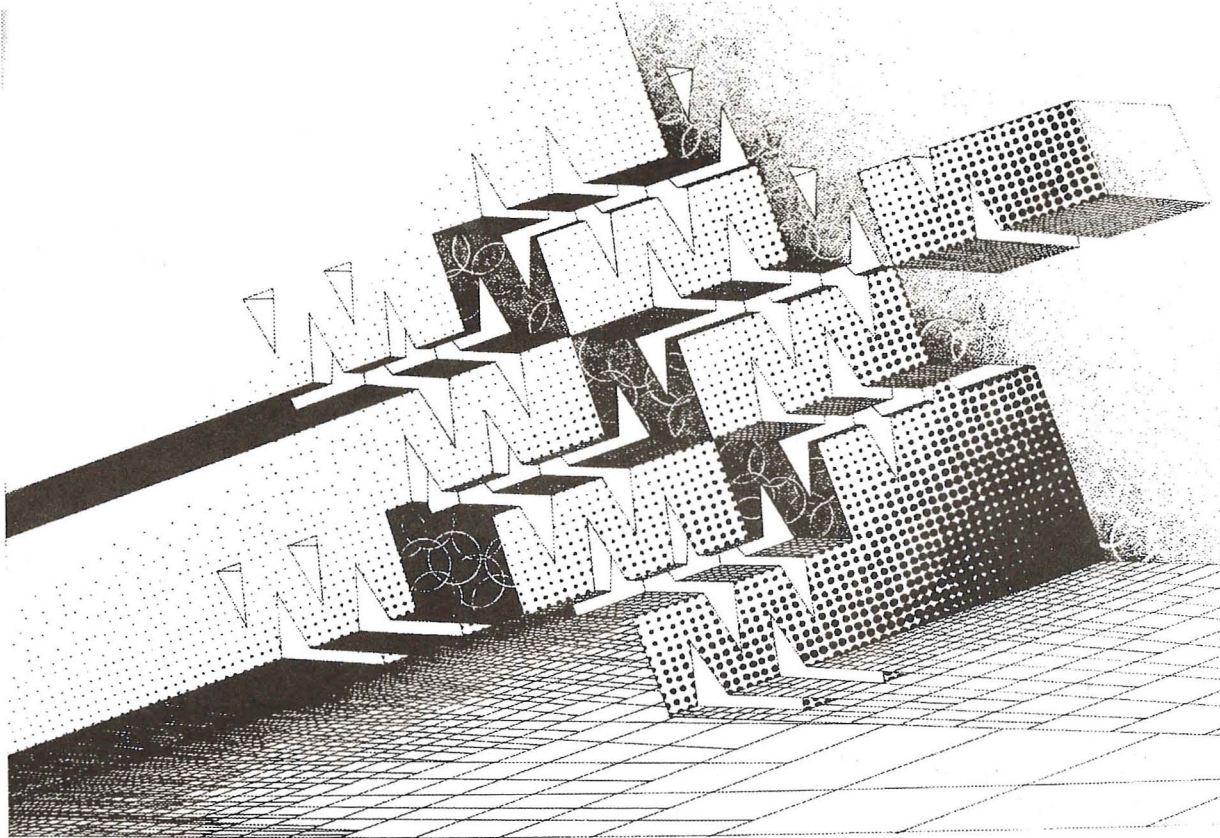


24

Carrie West

Selection of Merit

Untitled



An Ode to Poetry

25

Christina Giardini

I like writing poetry
As I like getting out of bed.
Too many rules to be followed
Yet nothing important to be said.

I
Can
Write
Short
Sentences or really big long sentences like this
one.

And rhythm and rhyme- oh my.
Lets see- what rhymes with my...
Aye, by, cry- Cry!
Poetry makes me want to cry.

And the words!
Where should I put them?
In a straight line like so?
 Indented?
Centered?
 Or

 Scattered
All over
 The
Page?

If I'm writing poetry
Can't I at least get paid?
I feel like this is work
 To think of so many things.

Punctuation- why did I even learn it?
Poetry just throws it away.
A period here. A comma there,
Or maybe nothing at all throughout
The entire thing
 To make the
Words all jumbled
 Together to be read as one
Complete thought.

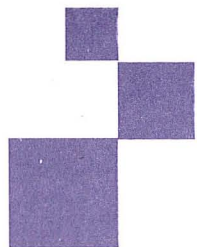
And subject matter!
I can write about stuff
 Deep...
 Deep...
 Deep... as destiny.
Or funny things to make you laugh- haha.
Or nothing at all
Like this.

Selection of Merit



Agoraphobia

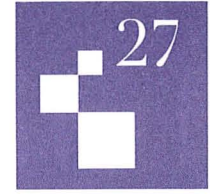
Amy Clark



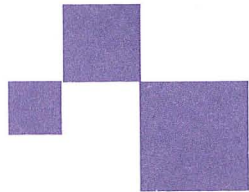
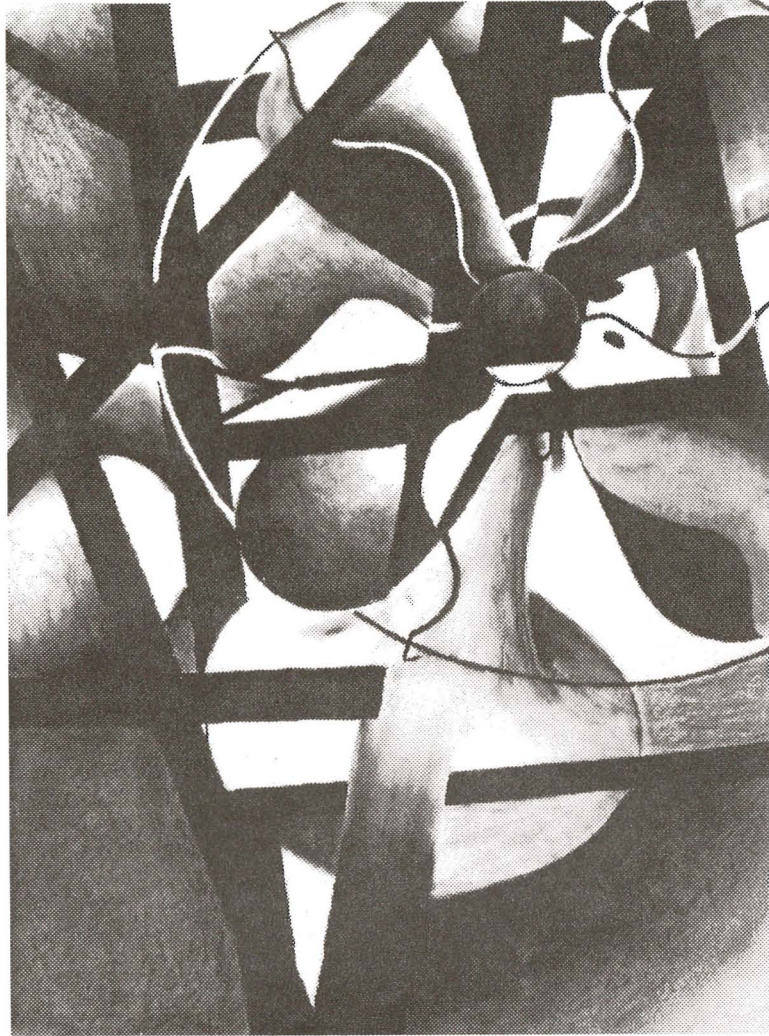
It is here that
you should remove
your disguise, end the
mystery that shields your
story from being told, unveil
the bride who waits patiently
to expose the beauty that she
is, trust in this house. Reveal
your thoughts to these walls;
it is only they who will keep
them safe. Safe within every
crack and every crevice. Tell
your every secret to the sheets
upon your bed; it is only here
they remain secure. Enclose
yourself, and they become your
refuge. Trust in this place...
trust in every level... trust until
your body rests beneath it.

Selection of Merit

Untitled



Erik McArthur



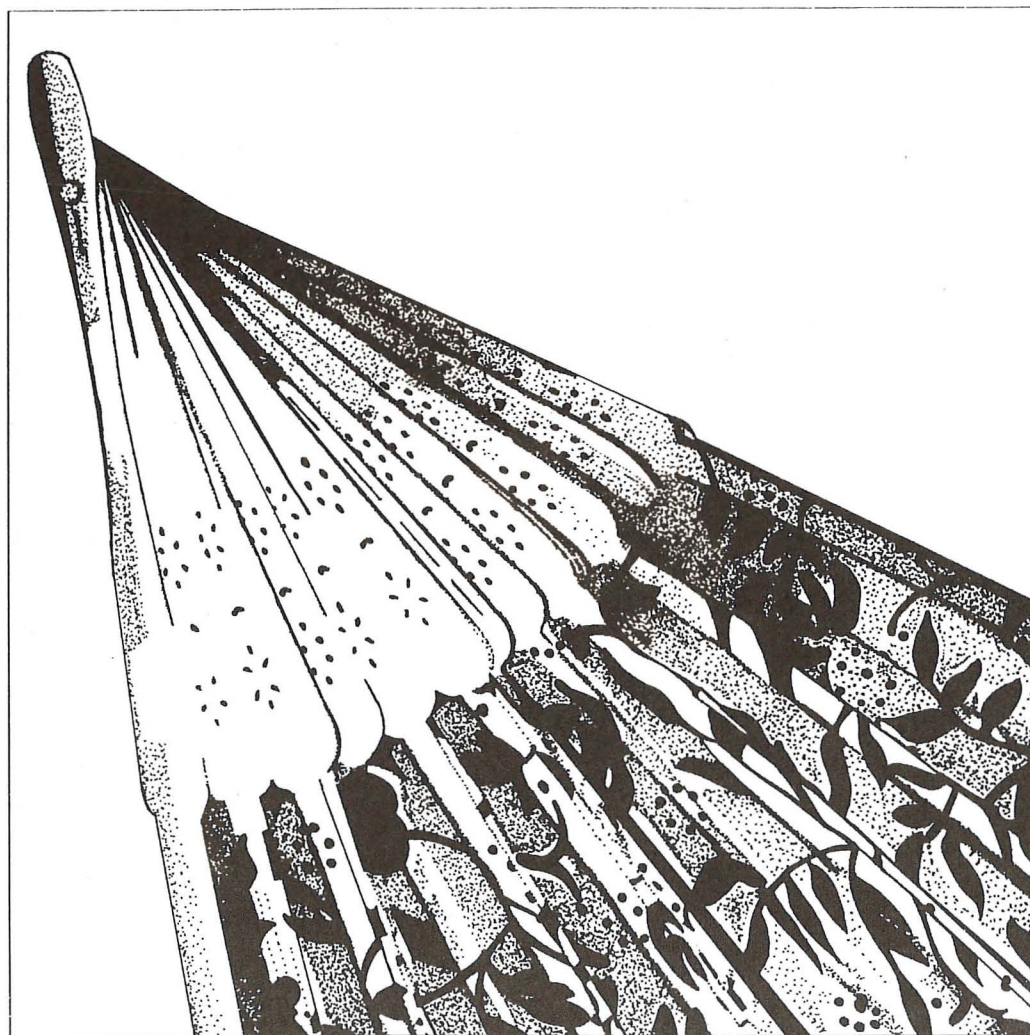
Selection of Merit

28



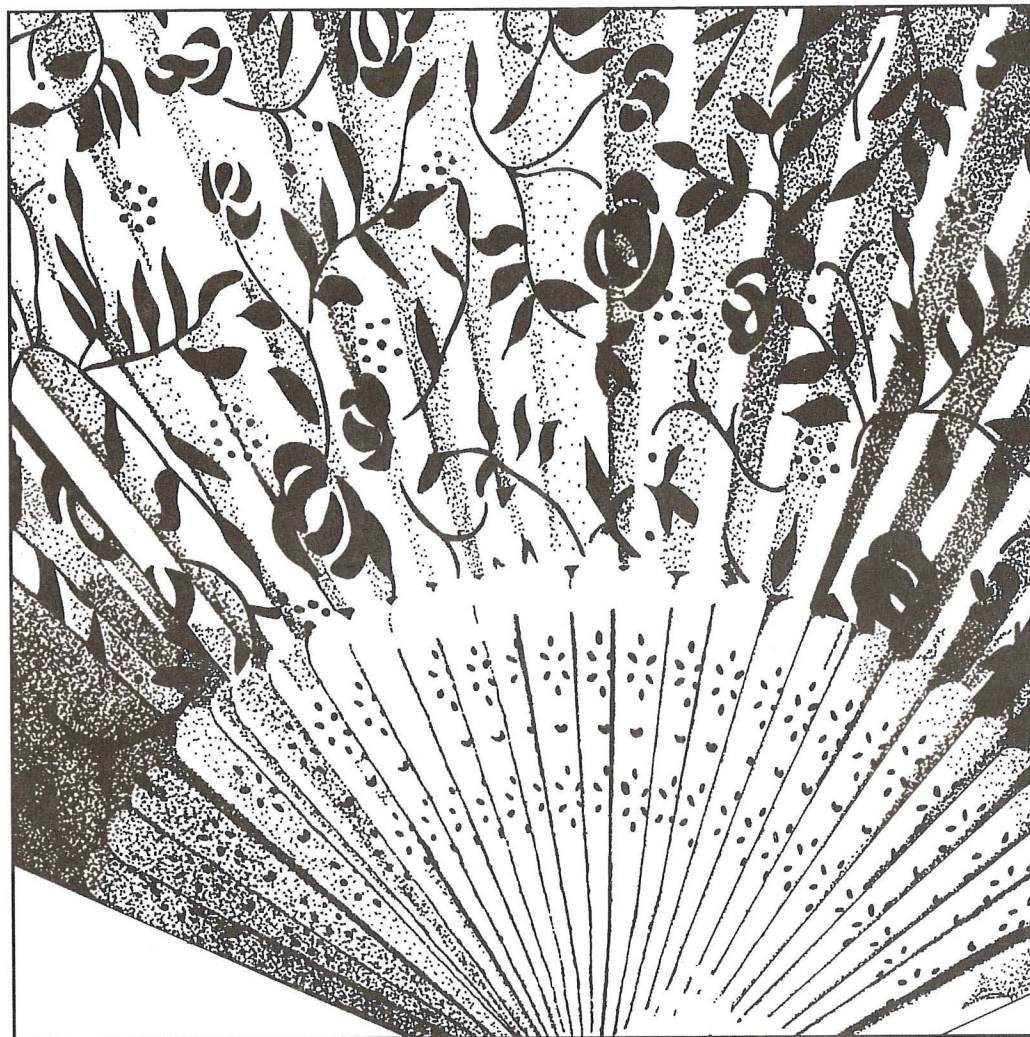
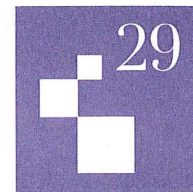
Maranda Anderson

East Meets West 2



Selection of Merit

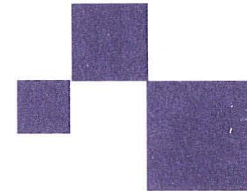
East Meets West 3



Maranda Anderson

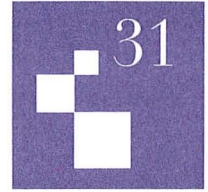
Eleanor B. Mathews writing award

The Mathews Award for “outstanding creativity” in writing, regardless of genre, is traditionally given to the student writer who has been published in more than one genre, whose creative work stands out from the competition, and who has written and published work over a period of time. This year we enjoy an embarrassment of riches in this regard. Three writers, Amy Clark, Heather Wright, and Grace Vermeer, have published writing in two or more genres in this year’s issue. Four writers, Christine Basney, Christine Ryan Sass, Wally Horsey, and Grace Vermeer, have published their work in previous editions of Patterns. We commend all of these student writers; all deserve praise and recognition; however, this year’s Eleanor Mathews Award clearly goes to Grace Vermeer for her outstanding work in all three literary genres, winning First Place Awards in Fiction, Poetry, and Essay (!), not to mention distinguishing herself by winning the Nickerson Award for Poetry two years running and the Colwell Award for Fiction in last year’s edition.



First Place Essay

Jewett's Legacy for Girls and Women in "A White Heron"



Grace Vermeer

For many years, Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) was viewed as a successful regional writer who sympathetically portrayed the ordinary lives and friendships of New England women. Critics praised her simple, clear style, but some saw her "field of observation [as] excessively limited" (Lewisohn 125), dealing "with only one [time] period (Smith 127), and lacking in social criticism" (Smith 129). Jewett's "A White Heron" was initially rejected by the Atlantic Monthly because it was "too sentimental" (Donovan 133). Published in 1886, many considered it to be one of her strongest short stories. Others called it "unconvincing fantasy" (Berthoff 133). But "A White Heron" has drawn critical attention in the past few decades, particularly by feminists, and is now widely anthologized. In this story Jewett subtly and skillfully addresses issues regarding girls and women that transcend both the region and the time period. Indeed, "A White Heron" still speaks with quiet strength to girls and women today. Set in patriarchal nineteenth century America, Sylvia stands as a model of courage and contrast to the beliefs and mores placed upon women. When Sylvia refuses to

reveal the heron's secret to the ornithologist, she challenges the beliefs that women are subordinate to men, dependent on men for fulfillment and lacking the ability to make sound judgments.

Although Sarah Orne Jewett was raised in a comfortable, middle class home in Maine where she was educated with care and experienced a wide range of social contacts, she was aware of the restrictive roles and expectations which society placed on women and girls in her day (Donovan 53). Fortunately, Jewett's father encouraged her "to range freely in all fields of knowledge" (Blanchard 175). However, there were many voices during the nineteenth century that propagated opposite views.

In an 1869 publication against women's suffrage, Horace Bushnell reiterated the belief that women by nature are subordinate to men. He states that men and women are so unlike each other "as to forbid any rational comparison as respects equality."

This pervasive attitude assumed a man's right to dominate society and reduced women to passive roles. Married women in particular lost a sense of individuality. Bushnell

declares that a married woman passes "out of sight legally, to be a covert nature included henceforth in her husband."

Within such confines, the belief naturally followed that women were dependent on men for fulfillment. An editorial in 1853, entitled "Man and Woman," concluded that a woman's mission was to focus her affection on a man and further his interests with "cheerful self-denial" because "the great unwashed condition of humanity" was too vast for her limited comprehension. While a man "sweeps the heavens with his gaze, to see what fairer worlds invite his adventure," a woman "quietly unpacks the trunk of his observation." A woman needed a man in order to define herself. Without a man to please, a woman lacked a sense of purpose.

Another common belief in Jewett's day was that women were easily enticed and lacked the ability to make sound decisions. The 1853 editorial, "Man and Woman," claimed that it was easy for men to obey the law and make intelligent decisions, whereas women were "less apt to weigh consequences" and "prone to renounce prudence altogether." Another editorial in 1883, on "The Voting of Women," warned the public that there would be a large group of women "who would welcome the opportunity to sell themselves for a good price at every election." Such beliefs enforced the ideology that men were morally superior.

Undoubtedly, it taught girls from an early age to question their ability to make sound judgments.

Within this social climate, Sylvia's refusal to reveal the heron's secret takes on new meaning. Not only is Sylvia young, but she lacks the social advantages Jewett experienced as a child. Having spent the first eight years of her life "in a crowded manufacturing town," Sylvia now lives with her grandmother on a lonely farm surrounded by woods. Her shy, sensitive nature blossoms among the birds, beasts and trees and for the first time she feels truly alive. When a young ornithologist enters her simple world and offers her ten dollars to reveal the location of the white heron's nest, society dictates that Sylvia should be subject to the man's wishes. He is an educated, charming man and she is only a shy, country girl. He can offer her ten dollars without a thought. She can only dream of what ten dollars would buy. Here is Sylvia's chance to connect with a man who could be her ticket to the outside world. He is asking for something that Sylvia can give and why shouldn't she? He is knowledgeable and knows what is best. She lacks the ability to make sound judgments.

Initially, Sylvia acts in accordance with the expected social mores. She follows the kind young man and when he shares his knowledge of the birds with her, she is fascinated. He

gives her a gift and soon she is enchanted. She forgets that it troubled her to see him shoot birds. She finds him "charming and delightful." The sense of camaraderie and excitement that she experiences with the young man awakens her latent sexuality. Her "woman's heart, asleep in the child, was vaguely thrilled by a dream of love." A longing for human connection begins to stir in Sylvia. What she experiences with the educated youth leaves her with an awareness of her "dull little life." Isolated, uneducated and without financial means or opportunities, Sylvia feels all the limitations and powerlessness of a young girl in the nineteenth century. The knowledgeable, adventurous young man embodies for Sylvia everything that lies beyond her limited scope (Donovan 70). In the past she had wistfully dreamed of climbing the great pine tree to catch a glimpse of the ocean, having heard its "great voice." Now wistful dreaming is not enough for Sylvia. Her desire to gain the admiration of the young man leads her to the one thing within her power. She decides to climb the towering old pine, "see all the world," and discover the location of the heron's nest. The "triumph and delight and glory" of offering the heron's secret to the charming ornithologist thrills Sylvia. She believes that by giving the young man the one thing he wants, she will please him and find

fulfillment. She doesn't know that when she climbs the tree, she will be transformed. Jewett uses such words as, "daring," "utmost bravery," and "great enterprise" to describe Sylvia's attempt to climb the great pine tree. "The way was harder than she thought" and it required that she "reach far and hold fast." There are forces that try to hinder her, almost as if to punish her. "The sharp dry twigs caught and held her and scratched her like angry talons." The tree seems to represent the barriers society places in Sylvia's path. Equality, self-identity, self-determination, confidence in one's ability to think and make sound judgements were all out of bounds for women. Sylvia was venturing into territory reserved for men and the journey was not easy. Then the language Jewett uses begins to change. The tree is described "like a great main-mast," a ship which Sylvia embarks on. It is "amazed [...] through all its ponderous frame as it felt this determined spark of human spirit," and it becomes Sylvia's ally, helping her to succeed. The tree acts as both the barrier and the means to Sylvia's self-discovery. Sylvia steps out with courage to face the forces that want to hinder her, the way opens up and she finds herself in a new place. She stands "trembling and tired but wholly triumphant, high in the tree-top." She sees the world, stretching out before her: farms, church steeples, villages, ships at sea.

Her imagination opens up and possibilities become as “bewilderingly bright” as the rising sun. “Truly it was a vast and awesome world” and she was seeing it without the help of the ornithologist. The excitement and fulfillment she experienced the day before with the young man, she now discovers can be created and found on her own. This idea is supported by Donovan (70). Sylvia begins to feel her own strength and worth. What was embodied in the young man, now becomes a separate entity that can be found without sacrificing who she is and what she values. She gazes in awe as the heron rises from his nest in a dead hemlock. She remembers what it is she loves and feels a bond with the white heron. When Sylvia returns to the ornithologist, she discovers “she cannot tell the heron’s secret and give its life away” even though the “grandmother fretfully rebukes her and the young man’s kind appealing eyes are looking straight in her own.” To betray the heron’s secret would involve betraying herself (Cary 102-103). Though the young Sylvia at times wonders about her decision, by refusing to sacrifice herself just to please the ornithologist she lays a foundation that ensures her ability to stand as an individual and find fulfillment in future relationships if she so chooses (Church 13).

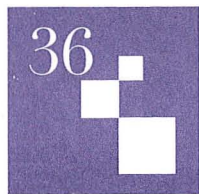
Sylvia’s refusal to reveal the heron’s secret challenged the social mores society imposed

on girls and women. Sylvia was expected to be subordinate to men. She was throwing away her chance for fulfillment with a young man who was “well worth making happy.” By thrusting aside money and opportunity, she was obviously a woman incapable of sound judgement. However, when Sylvia conquered the tree, she discovered an inner strength that refused to let her forfeit herself and be subordinate to men. She realized she did not need the young man to find fulfillment. All that she needed was close at hand, within herself. Sylvia could trust her inner voice to guide her to make a wise decision. Sylvia remains a model for young girls and women today, encouraging them to set aside the babbling voices of society and listen to an inner voice. In “A White Heron” Jewett leaves a profound legacy that is timeless.

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Seth Gilbert



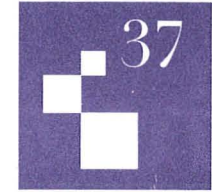
Selection of Merit

Follicles of My Identity



Second Place Essay

An Inner Salvation



Wally Horsey

Hatred is such a repulsive word! Hate crimes are usually perpetrated by the ignorant against an identifiable group or person that they know nothing about. Many times these transgressions are against the wrong person. I say that as if there is ever a right person. Clearly there has never been a just hate crime. Never has a person been beaten, robbed or killed because their lifestyle, color or origin deserved it! Hate crimes are just that, a crime and they should be dealt with as such! My chance to deal with hate came in September of 2004 when I was offered a part in the St. Clair County Community College (SC4's) version of The Laramie Project. On October 7th 1998, shortly following midnight, two men, Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, lured Matthew Shepard from The Fireside Bar in Laramie Wyoming. They told him they were gay and would give him a ride home. Their intent was to rob him and beat him. Their hatred caused Matt's death.

I have no doubt they were just going to rob Matt and beat him because he was a semi-rich, gay, nearly 22 year-old easy mark. Matt weighed a reported 110lbs and stood just

five inches over five feet. What happened in the mind of the two perpetrators can only be conjecture on my part. Only they know what they were thinking at the moment the robbery went from a class b felony to a crime against Gods sixth commandment, Thou shalt not kill!

They have made several claims of why they did it but they cannot change the facts. They murdered a 21 year old man for 30 dollars and a claim by Aaron McKinney that Matthew, "Put his hand on my leg, slid his hand like he was going to grab my balls."

They could've killed him outright; but no, they beat him around his head with the butt end of a .357 Magnum. A gun that Clint Eastwood once claimed is, "The most powerful hand gun in the world!" They beat him with it until he was an unrecognizable mass of skin and bones. They left him tied to a fence, in nearly freezing temperatures... for 18 hours. Aaron Kreifels stated that he thought Matthew was a Halloween gag, a mechanical dummy when he found him near a bicycle path a few miles outside the city. Six days later, on October 12th, the circle of hatred was complete. Matthew Sheppard died

from the beating he received at the hands of that hate.

In September of 2004, I was weighed down with a full time students schedule of four classes, two part time jobs (each over 20 hours a week), being a single father to the worlds greatest eight year old boy who was just starting hockey three nights a week and all of life's other entangled web of duties that go along with the ability to breath air.

In September of 2004, I was offered the chance of my theatric existence to do something for my fellow human being and I accepted yet another challenge in my frantic life. I accepted an offer to be a member of the story that told Matthew Shepard's death.

"My God! What have I done?" Was my first thought when I read on the dirty white piece of paper that was pinned to the gray fabric wall in front of the Fine Arts office. That was when I realized I was chosen to fill one of the eight positions to represent SC4's theater group in its portrayal of Moises Kaufman's play. I puffed out my chest as I inhaled then I said, "What the hell, somehow I seem to be able to manage, I always do!" Then I exhaled... fully... and wondered, "How the hell could I do a part that requires me to play 10 of 65 characters the eight of us in the ensemble would portray?"

That's when I thought of the reason I would do it. I would help keep a light on a plague

that seems to have overwhelmed our nation. It would be my effort to help heal our minds, heal our hearts and heal our souls. It would become my chance at redemption from a childhood of misinformation feed to me by my parents, parents who used to make a family employee, a family friend, eat dinner alone on the back porch of my childhood home.

In the middle of September the SC4 troop started rehearsals four times a week for about two hours a day. That's when I found myself required to play a part of a beast that I truly loathe. I was given the part of the Reverend Fred Phelps. Rev. Phelps is a disgusting sub-human being. He represents the principal reason I consider myself an atheist. To me, no god would allow something so disgusting to breathe the fresh air he created. So playing Phelps would allow me depict what I believe his kind represents. To demonstrate the hate that these so-called people of God... of love... of God's Love, seethe!

As we drew closer to the production dates in October, I began to get frustrated as the pressure grew to send the message I sought to send. Several times I concerned the director as I froze from exasperation of failure to relax and let my characters take flight. Several times I thought I wouldn't be able to pull it off. One of those moments came during dress rehearsal the night prior to our opening. The

pressure caused several events that lead to my decay on stage and then the directors, our poor tortured directors, near suicide. OK, maybe that's a touch dramatic but it was a dramatic play!

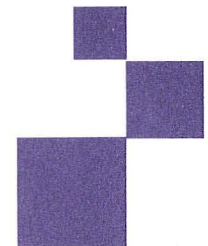
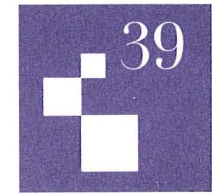
Alas, it was opening night and my last shot to get it right, at least semi right. I had my lines, I had my cues but I lost my mind!

Then as the lights came up I found myself on stage with the full confidence of the seven people that trusted me the most at that moment. For the first time I relaxed and calmness overtook me. I never felt so at peace on stage before. My voice was never as clear and calm as it was that evening. I reached an inner peace that I have never attained before. My characters took full flight.

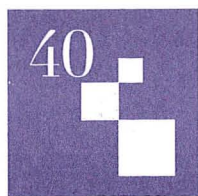
Was my message received by the masses?

No, probably not. Did my message change a single mind? I'd truly like to think it did.

Did my message help me deal with my own personal phantoms of hate? Absolutely.

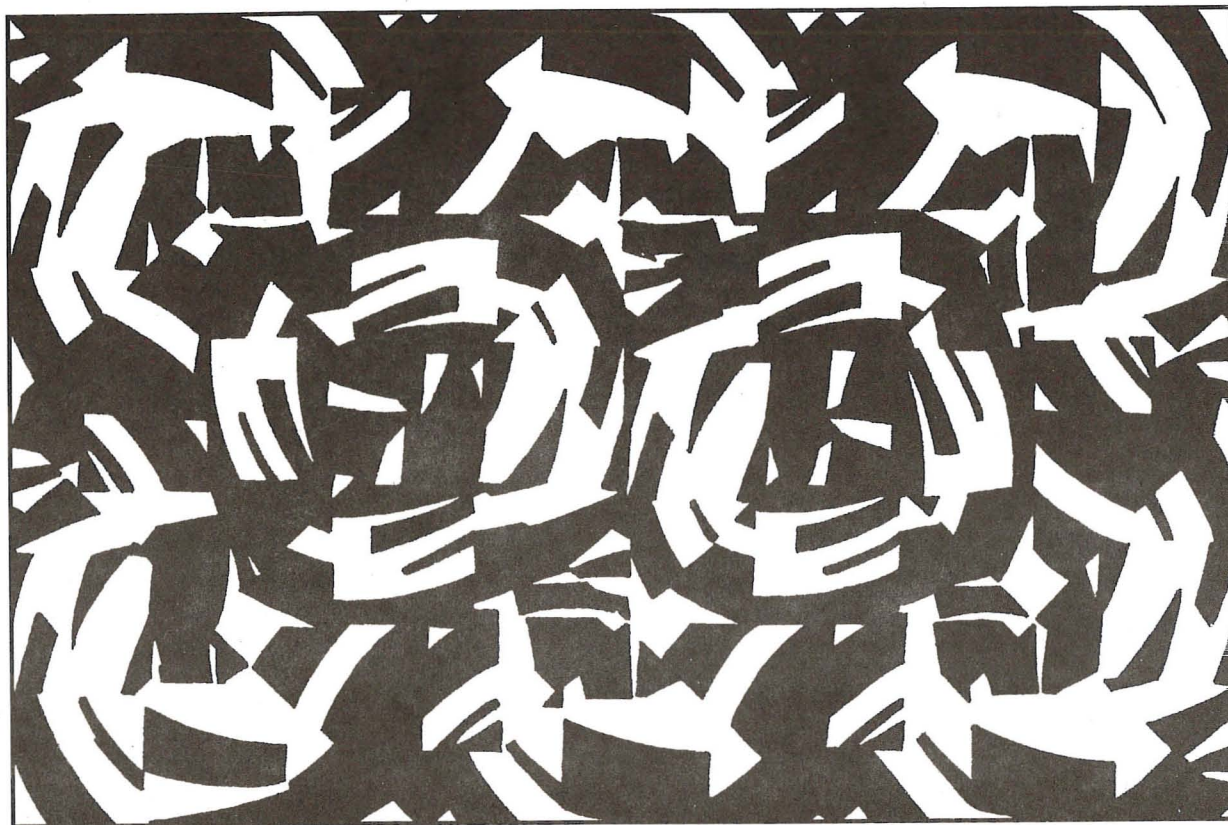


Kelly Bright



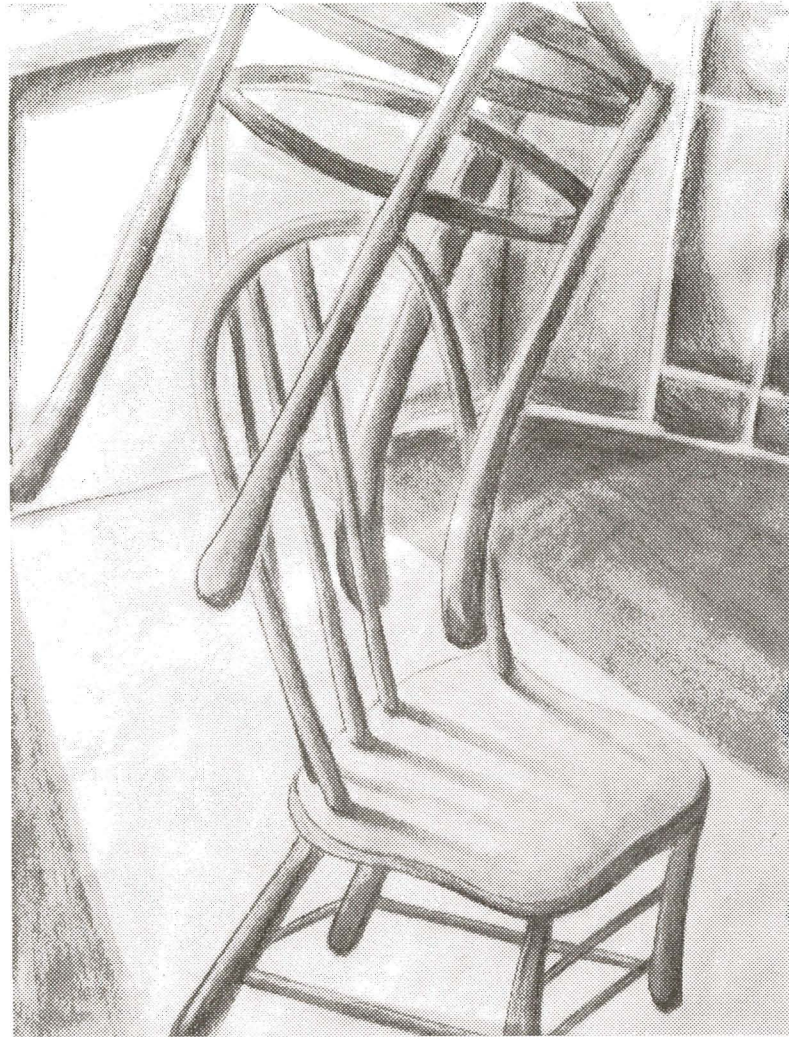
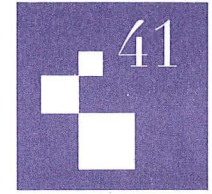
Selection of Merit

Paradigm Shift

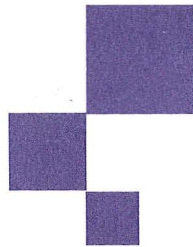


Selection of Merit

Chairs in the Dark

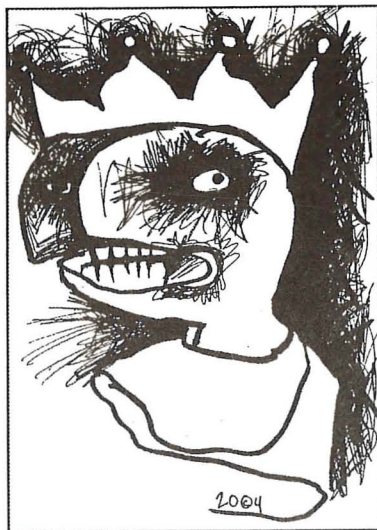


Jason Westlake

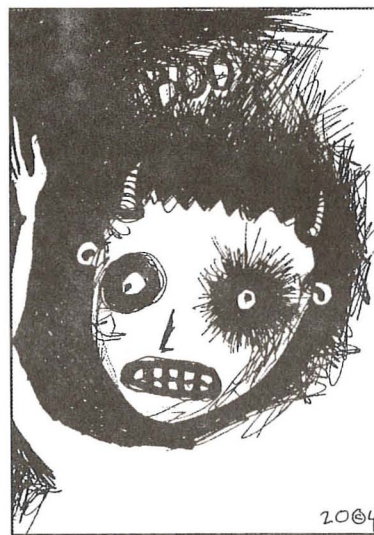


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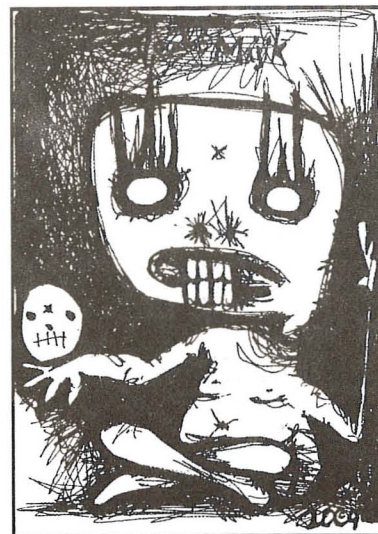
Turtle King



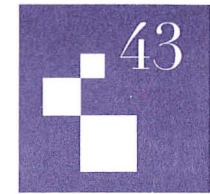
Boo!



VoodooMajik



Selection of Merit Faulkner's Nancy: Caught in a Southern Web of Female Tragedy



To create his works of fiction, William Faulkner drew from a world that he knew best—his “own little postage stamp of native soil” in Mississippi, where he was born in 1897 (Morris 7). Recalling those years at the turn of the century, Faulkner’s brother, Murray, states: “How kind they were, those years of long ago; how gentle the life and how pleasant the memories of it” (Morris 12). And yet, Faulkner’s works, set in that same time and place, carry themes of violence and abuse, refuting, as it were, that serene portrait of Southern gentility and tradition, and exposing the harsh reality that lay beneath its surface. “That Evening Sun” is an authentic portrayal of the complex issues involving race and gender in the South. It is Nancy’s story, a woman caught in a web of evil and injustice. In “That Evening Sun,” Nancy’s fate is directly linked to her status, both as an African-American and as a woman, in Mississippi in the early 1900’s. It is a status rooted in Southern myth and fear, a status that sets her up for sexual exploitation and domestic violence, ultimately leading to her doom.

Some critics argue that Nancy’s fate was “a result of her own weak, passive, masochistic nature” (Slabey 410). However, when “That Evening Sun” is placed within a historical and cultural context, Nancy’s fate becomes directly connected to the status Southern society forces upon her as an African-American woman, an argument that Slabey agrees with (410). Critics place the setting of “That Evening Sun” in 1899 (Kuyk 34). However, to understand Nancy, one must return to the Old South. The beliefs and myths that governed southern society at the turn of the century and well into the 1960’s originated in the Old South.

In 1662, a Virginia law declared that “children born to slave women would be slaves [...] the property of the woman’s owner.” Eventually, this law became the South’s “legal justification” for the sexual abuse of black women, including very young girls. The reasoning was that since “everything about a woman belonged to the slaveholders, then obviously the right of sexual access would be included.” Valued as “breeders,” black women were raped by white men. Many

Grace Vermeer

slave women fiercely resisted sexual exploitation, sometimes resulting in beatings and death, but an attractive black woman who was sold as a prostitute or mistress was virtually “powerless.” In 1857, one slave woman, advertised for such purposes, sold for over \$5,000. Out of this horrifying abuse, rose the stereotypical Southern myth of the sexually available black woman. Black women in the “peculiar morality of the South,” became “unrapeable” (Hine and Thompson 16, 73, 93-97).

Not every Southern slaveholder engaged in the institutionalized rape of African American women. Some refrained for moral reasons or out of respect for their wives. But the abuse was so prevalent that Mary Chestnut, a Southern woman in the mid 1800’s, wrote, “Like the patriarchs of old, our men live all in one house with their wives and their concubines; and the mulattos one sees in every family partly resemble the white children. Any lady tells you who is the father of all the mulatto children in everybody’s household, but her own” (Hine 50). White southern women responded to the infidelity of their husbands with bitterness, jealousy and pain, often venting their rage on black women, seeing them as sexual competition and not as victims of a great social evil. Caught within a web of patriarchal power and abuse, both

white and black southern women suffered. As African American women were cast in stereotypical roles of sexual power and allure-ment, white women were placed on pedestals of “chastity and powerlessness” (Gwin 4, 5, 13, 79).

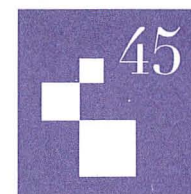
Forced to abandon slavery after the Civil War, the South was determined “to return to as near an approximation as they could get” (Hine 167). Fearful of the black vote and motivated by white supremacist ideology, the white South turned to violence, primarily rape and lynching, to terrorize and control the black community. Leaders such as General M.W. Gary of South Carolina encouraged white anarchy: “Every Democrat must feel honor bound to control the vote of at least one Negro [...] as each individual may determine how he may best accomplish it. Never threaten a man individually. If he deserves to be threatened, the necessities of the time require that he should die” (Hine 167). Entire black communities were burned, women raped, and both women and men lynched. “Between 1878 and 1898, about ten thousand people were lynched in America, primarily in the South” and countless black women were raped (Hine 167-171). Once again, white men justified raping black women and black men were powerless to protect their women.

The myth of white virgin/black whore continued to dominate southern society. Social, legal and political systems were infused with this twisted bias. The rape of a white woman became “the crime of crimes, for which there was no remission” (Kerr 155-156), but “black women could be raped with impunity by white men” (Hine 167). To quote one white southern man: “A Nigra girl is always a little bit willing—especially if the man is white” (Kerr 204). Sexual relations with a young black girl became a rite of passage for southern men and African American “women were sacrificed to protect white girls” (Kerr 160-61).

Kerr reports that Southern blacks were at “the mercy of any white person and any white man will be supported by the police.” Sheriffs and deputies in southern small towns were often gods unto themselves (Kerr 196-197). Mississippi’s corrupt systems and ruthless cruelty to non-whites make up one of the bleakest chapters in American history. It is within this context that Faulkner presents Nancy--the white man’s prostitute, Jesus’ wife, and the Compson’s domestic servant. Nancy’s status as an African American woman is reflected in the abuse she suffers at the hands of white men, both Mr. Stovall and the jailer. There is ambiguity surrounding Nancy’s arrest and her relationship with

Mr. Stovall, a “cashier in the bank and a deacon in the Baptist church,” but there are clues within the story. The fact that Nancy publicly humiliates Mr. Stovall, by revealing that he owes her money for sexual favors, indicates her disdain for him. She repeatedly mocks him—“When going to pay me, white man?” despite him knocking her down and kicking her in the mouth. Calling him “white man” emphasizes their differences in status and at the same time emits scorn. Her contempt is evident when, “lying in the street, laughing,” she “spat out some blood and teeth,” and continued to taunt him. Faulkner does not give details why Nancy engages in sex for money with Mr. Stovall, but when Nancy’s derision and Mr. Stovall’s violence are combined with the facts of history, the relationship points to the sexual exploitation of black women by white men. Publicly humiliating Mr. Stovall was the one way Nancy could assert her power. The marshal restraining Mr. Stovall, to prevent him from kicking Nancy again, is an example of Faulkner’s tendency to “soften the realities” of the times by portraying sheriffs as generally humane and by limiting the physical brutality that blacks suffered. Kerr states that the facts of Mississippi show otherwise (198, 226).

Nancy also suffers at the hands of the white



jailer. Nancy tries to commit suicide by hanging herself, but the jailer "cut her down and revived her; then he beat her, whipped her." As a white man and an official, the jailer uses unwarranted violence without any fear of public opinion. Nancy's race and gender place her at the mercy of white men. Faulkner makes no indication that Nancy or anyone else protests this mistreatment. It was society's norm.

Nancy's status as an African American woman is also revealed in her relationship with Jesus. As Nancy's husband, he was not the type to "fetch and deliver the clothes" like some of "the husbands of the washing women." With a "razor scar down his face," Jesus appears both sinister and dangerous, especially when he begins to boldly assert his bitterness against white men while sitting in a white man's kitchen. He refers to Nancy's pregnancy as a "watermelon" and her cutting reply is, "It never come off of your vine, though." Jesus' threat to "cut down the vine it did come off of" shows his desire to kill the white man Nancy has been involved with. His next bitter complaint portrays the injustice of the times and reveals the deep seated anger African American men felt as their women were exploited: "I cant hang around white man's kitchen [...] but white man can hang around mine. White man can come

in my house, but I cant stop him." In blues language, the "images of fruit on the vine" are sexual and "the kitchen is also a metaphor for a woman's body" (Bennett 341-42).

Jesus' comment takes in both the literal accounts of white men entering black homes and raping women, as well as the widespread sexual exploitation of black women already discussed. But it goes even further. It reflects the complex issues black men and women faced in their own relationships as a result of the evils society imposed on them. Nancy's cutting remark displays obvious antagonism toward Jesus. Her flaunting of infidelity with a white man, whom it appears she despises, reveals the deterioration of her relationship with Jesus.

Hines makes this reflection: "When historians talked about the rape of enslaved women and free women who lived under white dominance, they often concentrated on the damage that this act did to the black male's sense of esteem and self-respect. He was powerless to protect his woman from white rapists [...] Few scholars have assessed the effect that rape, the threat of rape, and domestic violence had on the psychic development of black women" (Hine 169-170). Both Jesus and Nancy are caught in a web of pain. Powerless to vent his rage against the white man, Jesus will direct it toward Nancy

instead (Kerr 204). His motivation “stems from his antagonism toward her for what appears to him to be her collusion with white American society to emasculate and repress him” (Kuyk 40).

Jesus leaves and the fear that she will be murdered with “that razor on that string down his back” looms before Nancy. Her terror suggests her knowledge of Jesus’ character and the possibility that he has been physically violent or threatening to her before. Crimes among blacks were leniently treated and therefore common (Kerr 203). Nancy says, “Wont no nigger stop him.” As a black woman in Mississippi, she knew it was useless to “telefoam the marshal.”

Nancy’s status is also revealed in her relationship as domestic servant to the Compson’s. Although Mr. Compson accommodates Nancy’s fear by walking her home and allowing her to sleep over with the children, he downplays it. His reply to Nancy, “If you’d just let white men alone” reflects the entrenched view of the sexually available black female. Mrs. Compson’s jealousy, helpless posturing, and manipulation is seen in her remark: “You’ll leave me alone, to take Nancy home? Is her safety more precious to you than mine?” Her statements suggest she is still playing her part in the Southern myth of the helpless white female and her jealousy

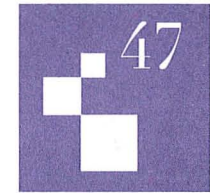
may reflect a white woman’s fear of a black woman’s sexual power, the other half of the myth.

That Nancy reveals her fear of imminent murder to the Compson’s, reflects the authenticity of her terror. Domestic violence was a taboo subject for black women. Revealing such secrets to white people was seen by African American women as a betrayal of their men, whose status in a white man’s world was already tenuous (Hine 302).

Nancy’s desperate attempts to persuade the children to stay with her and their ambivalence to her plight, heightens the sense of alienation, terror and helplessness that Nancy feels. She has nothing that will buy their time or favor and she is too distraught to entertain them in a convincing way. Even the children do not want to be inconvenienced for her sake.

When Nancy realizes the full extent of her situation, that she cannot enlist the help of anyone to defend her, she becomes numb, succumbing to hopelessness. “I reckon what I going to get ain’t no more than mine.” Alienated and alone, she waits in numb fear for the inevitable. “I just done got tired,” she said. “I just a nigger. It ain’t no fault of mine.”

Although Faulkner left the ending ambiguous, placed within its historical and cultural



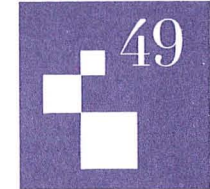


context, Nancy's terror and helplessness are not ambiguous. Her fate, linked to her status as an African American and as a woman, is assumed. If anything, the ambiguity heightens the tragedy of Nancy's plight, emphasizing the fragile thread of uncertainty on which the lives of many African American women hung. That so many resisted with courage and dignity remains their tribute. That Nancy succumbed to hopelessness is an authentic, tragic portrayal of a society engaged in "collective cruelty." Robert Bly wrote: "All over the American brain, there are huge areas like cutover forests, lobes made sterile by collective cruelty toward race, by one egotistical murder after the other to keep a people in poverty as one keeps cows [....] An art work can pierce that mass of guilts, gradually loosen it, help it to fall apart. But to do this, the work of art must carry real grief" (178).

William Faulkner's "That Evening Sun" is one such work.

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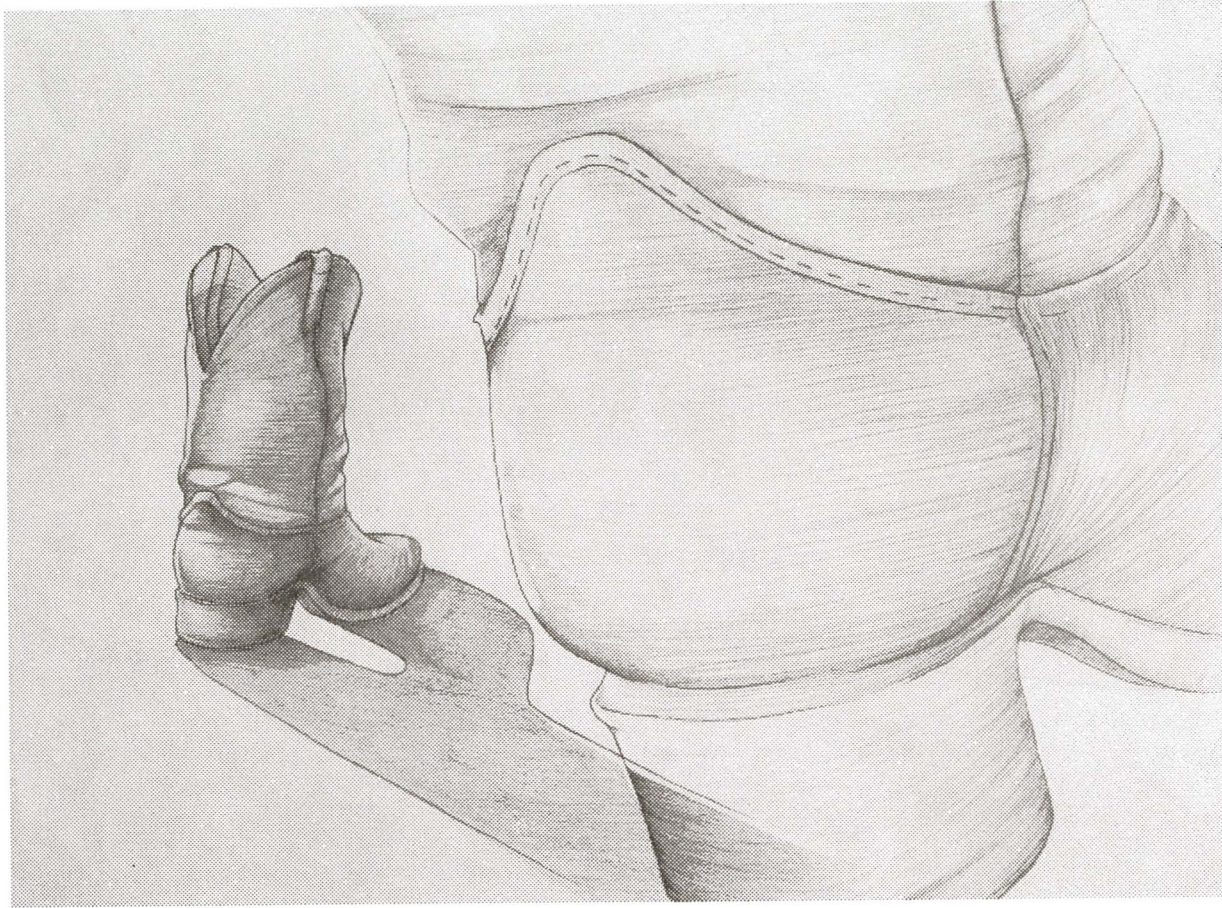


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Joseph Cilluffo

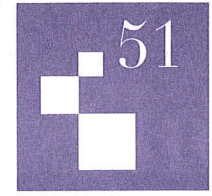
Selection of Merit

I Hate Cowboys

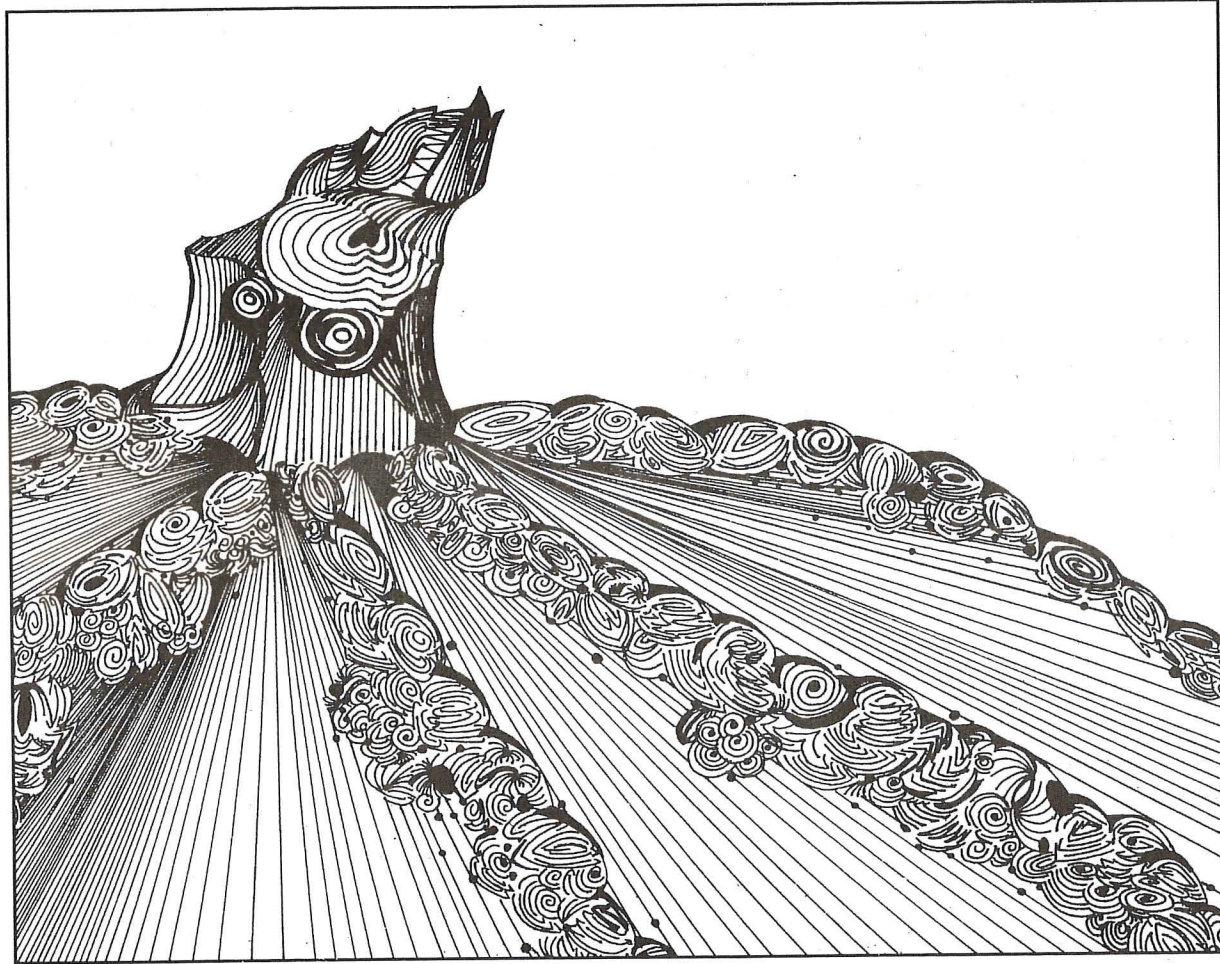


Selection of Merit

The Object of Illusion



Sarah Phelps



Selection of Merit

Persnickety

She was trying to quietly celebrate fifty years of life. It's fun working with her, listening to her joke with customers telling them, "well aren't we persnickety today." Work isn't so boring when working with her, she always has something "persnickety" to say. We wouldn't let anything as important as a fiftieth birthday pass without some noise. There were big posters and signs proclaiming to everyone who passed the store "she's 50 today". We laughed and had so much fun when she allowed us to celebrate this time with her. All the while there was a small, insignificant matter going on within her body that she assured us was nothing and promised to go to the doctor "just to be safe." She went in expressing concern over a seemingly small medical issue only to read urgent worry in the faces of those examining her.

Time quickly sped up. Check up, mammogram, ultrasound, biopsy. The Sunday before her mastectomy we were in a parade. Several of us rode around town in the back of a pick-up truck pulling an elaborate float. When the parade was over our entertaining young driver took us through town for one more "lap." We had so much

fun that afternoon, maybe we diverted her attention for a few short hours.

At that time her husband was out of work, she was earning the only income for the household. The most important bill was now medical insurance. How would her family hold on? How would the bills be paid? A fundraiser was organized by a couple of close friends. Many people pitched in and made it a success. It seemed as if the entire town attended. Some of her monetary issues were addressed, for the time being anyway.

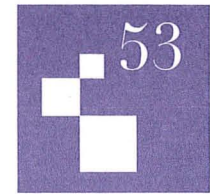
My nine-year-old son asked why he hadn't seen her at the store. I realized I had never discussed Cancer with my children. It's a topic many tend to avoid and I'm no exception. He always makes her laugh. She has a special place in her heart for him. I told him she was sick and a doctor removed one of her "boobs." He looked at me in a way only he can. He raised one eyebrow way up, almost to his hairline, and quizzically asked, "She only has one boob?" I explained that there was something inside it that was killing her and the doctor had to take it away. He then answered, "She had a killer boob! She didn't touch me with it did she?" I must

remember to watch what I discuss with that child when I'm driving. I had been praying for her so much and now I was laughing so hard I nearly drove into the ditch. I asked her if he could visit. She wanted him to and I think she was surprised that I thought I had to ask. He asked her the same questions he asked me, maybe more. He had her laughing in no time. We continue to visit her, but don't see her as often as we should.

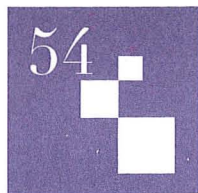
Chemotherapy. Chemotherapy. Just looking at the word frightens one. Now she has chemotherapy every three weeks. At first she wasn't too sick from the treatment. We were hoping she would be different than everyone else we had heard about. We were praying that she wouldn't be sick. The second treatment was harsh. Vomiting ensued. The treatments made her too ill to drive. She wanted to be alone but needed to allow someone to take her to treatments. Not wanting to sit around, she keeps up with housework each day and rests in her comfortable chair afterwards. I met up with her one evening after work. I heard she was out of the house and visiting friends. I hadn't seen her in a few weeks and felt a tinge of guilt for not making time to stop in and see her. I just wanted to hug her and make her all better. She never said anything about my lack of attentiveness. She walked up to me with her great big smile and told me how

much she missed me and how happy she was to see me. Always worried about others, she was going through the most trying time of her life, and she was concerned about how I was doing. She asked me to sit down and have a beer with her. We sat and talked for a little while. She gently brushed her hand across her head to show me that her hair was falling out. I missed her so much and I could tell how much losing her hair was upsetting her. I hugged her, no I nestled her to my shoulder, and we both cried.

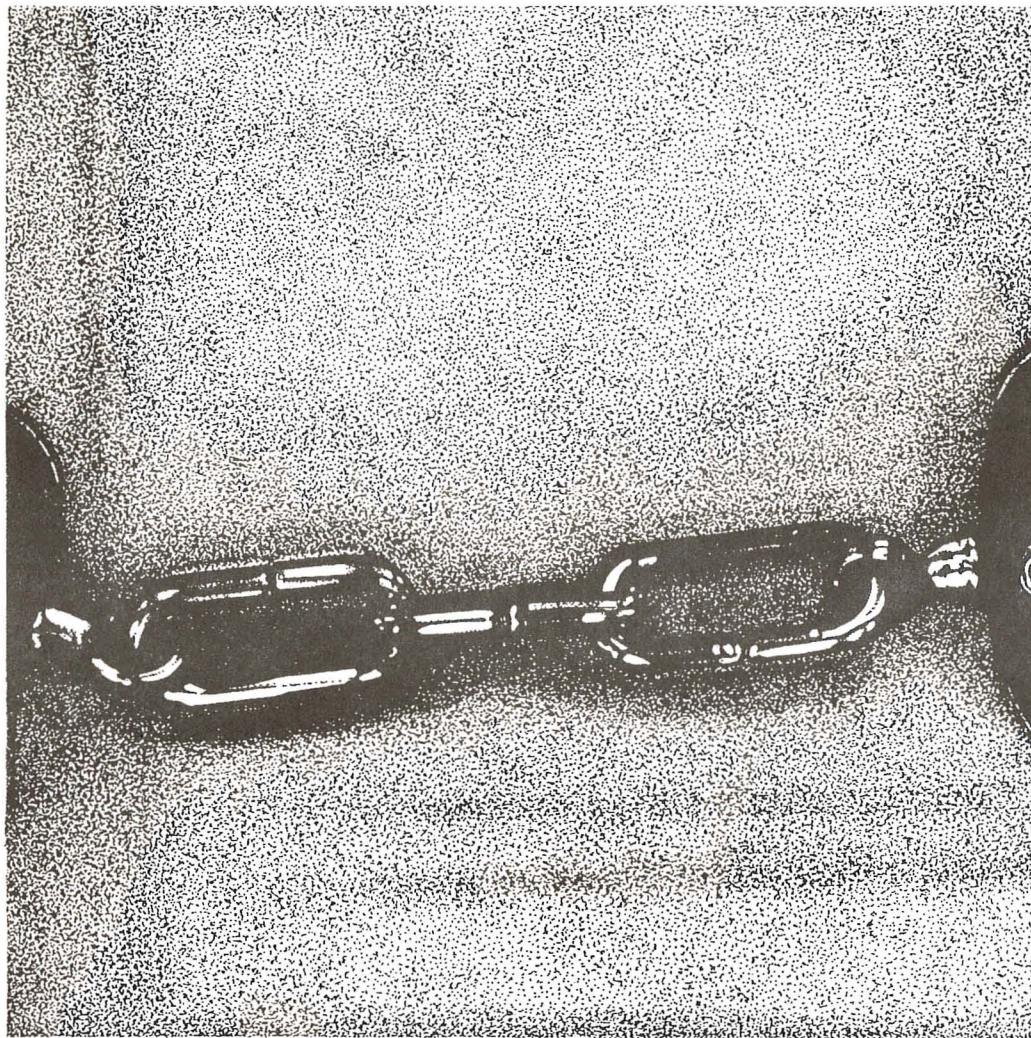
She has two more chemo treatments scheduled in the next few weeks. Different silly hats and scarves adorn her melon. She has to get out of the house, now she works a few hours each week. It is wonderful to see her bright smile when I arrive at work for the evening shift. As she leaves and I stand behind the counter watching her head home, I know she will be okay. She has to be. She's too persnickety to do otherwise.



Carrie West

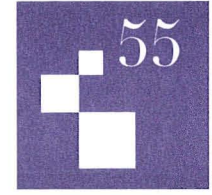


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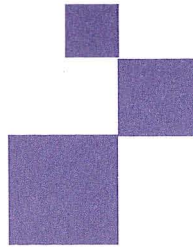
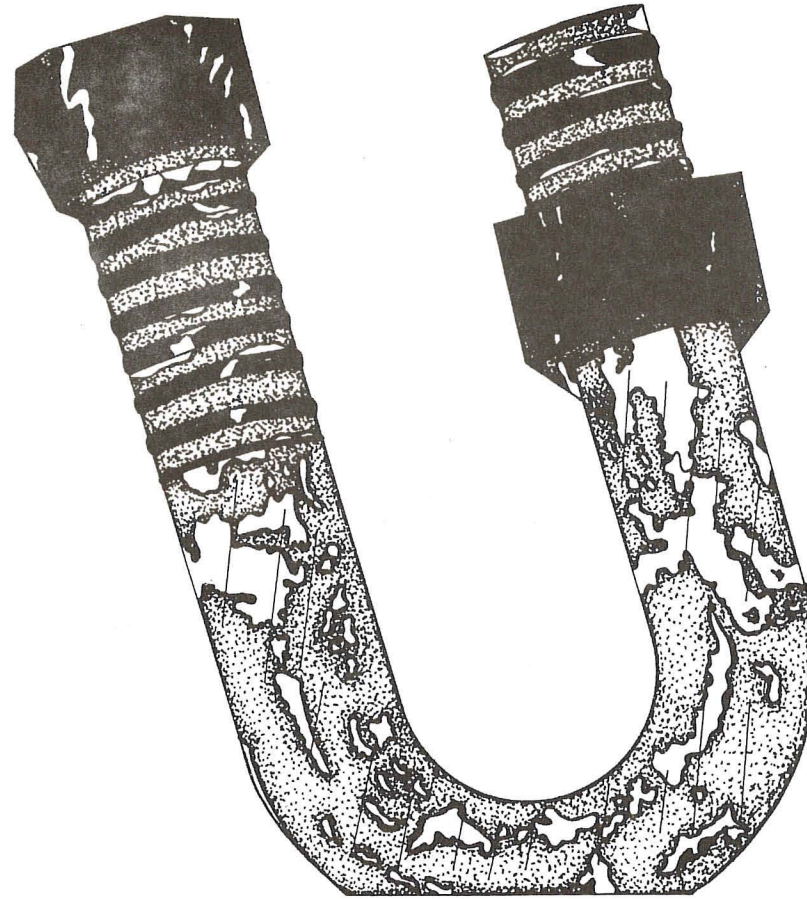


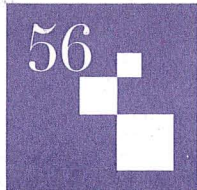
Selection of Merit

U Threading



Richard Tierman





First Place Short Story

My Friend Alice

"My Friend Alice" is a fascinating, ambitious tale that never flags in interest. The writer has performed a minor miracle in making believable characters out of the strange six-year-old Alice and the even stranger, complex eight-year-old narrator, Annie. The specific details make for a rich texture, the precise and picturesque writing style is captivating, and the sentences are worth reading out loud.

The lumpy gunnysack didn't sink right away. It jerked and bobbed in the green algae and the puppies cried and wiggled inside the sack, then it tipped, the scummy foam parted and it sank into the dark murky water of the pond. I crouched behind the blackberry bushes near the edge of the woods, the sharp dry grass poked and scratched my bare legs beneath my skirt but I didn't move until the man climbed into the black beat-up truck and roared off, spitting gravel and dust into the hot afternoon air. I stared until the dust drifted down and settled in the weeds along the ditch. I crept from behind the tangled bushes, the blood pounded in my head and I thought I heard puppies crying but the green algae floated serene and still on the pond. My father had warned me never to go near the deep water so I turned and trudged up the hill toward home. I'd met that man once before, the day I followed Davey and Jake down to Perch Creek where the water trickled under the wooden

bridge. They went to catch crayfish. I went for fossils. It was cool and dark under the bridge, the doves built their nests in the heavy wooden beams and if we came down early in the morning I could hear their low mournful cries—Coo-ah, coo, coo, coo. I found all the fossil rocks I could carry that day and my brothers needed two more crayfish, so I started back up the road figuring they would catch up soon enough.

I walked about twenty yards when I saw the dust rising far up on the bend and a black truck moved slowly toward me. I wondered, should I go back to the creek? I remembered what Jacquie, my friend from school said, "It's the cars that creep slowly by that scare the heck out of me, but when I see one coming I march and sing at the top of my lungs—all the hits from the movies on TV. Or this is another good trick, Annie. You turn and face the woods, stick your hands on your hips and holler—How long does it take you to pee,

anyway? Then they think your friend will be stepping out of the woods any minute.” But we didn’t have a TV and the only songs I knew were hymns from church or songs off my father’s records. Mahala Jackson. Eddy Arnold. Beethoven’s Pastoral. Besides, the woods was further up and I didn’t have Jacquie’s knack for performing, so I viewed the approaching truck and decided to walk with my head high and my eyes straight ahead. If the truck stopped, I would smile and be all sweetness and light as if I wasn’t afraid at all. The man hung his arm out the window of the dusty truck and the tires crunched in the gravel and crept toward me. The truck was piled with beds, tables, boxes, lumpy mattresses and a couple of chair legs poked out. A tin bucket clanged with each bump and in the far back corner three hounds strained on their tethers, howling and barking. The driver thumped the side of the dented truck door and hollered at the hounds, they yelped and grew quiet and he leaned out the window, his eyes bulging in his bloated face. “How you doin’, sweetheart?” The sweat trickled down his cheeks near his sideburns. A stout woman peered around his shoulder while the skinny man beside her leaned forward, his eyes narrowed and he pressed his lips together in a thin line. I was shaking so hard I didn’t notice Jake and Davey come up behind me, lugging their

buckets of crayfish. The man pushed back his straw hat, wiped the sweat off his forehead with his grimy hand and said, “We’re lookin’ for the old Harmon place. I reckon you kids could tell us where it is.”

We didn’t say anything, we just stared at their faces, the mangy dogs and the mountain of junk stacked and tied on the back of the rusted truck.

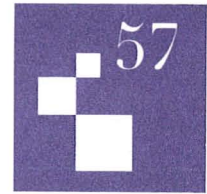
“You kids talk?” The man shrugged his shoulders and waited. “Is that what y’all do in these parts of West Virginia—gawk like a bunch of idiots?”

The woman leaned over and looked at Davey, “Honey, can you tell us if this is Gypsy Flats Road?”

Davey set down his bucket, squared his small shoulders and stuck his red hair and freckled face up at the man. “This is Gypsy Flats Road,” he said, “but we never heard of the Harmon place.” He glared at the man and didn’t budge.

Davey was always getting himself in trouble, and no amount of whippings from our father seemed to change that, but right then I was thinking how fine it was to have a brother three years older than me who wasn’t scared of anything.

I perked up and stared right into that truck and the next thing I saw was Alice. She was wedged between the lady and the skinny man, bending forward looking at me, and for



three whole seconds I forgot about everything except her eyes until the dogs started barking and making a ruckus. The man leaned out and spat in the dirt near Davey's bare feet, revved the motor and ground the gears as the truck inched forward and rumbled down the gravel road.

"Do y'all gawk like a bunch of idiots?" said Davey, mocking the man's slow drawl while Jake picked up a rock and fired it in the direction of the disappearing truck. Like I said, my brothers had spunk and sometimes it came in handy. We walked up Gypsy Flats Road to where our farmhouse stood on a knoll at the intersection of County Road 31. I carried my fossils and they toted the crayfish, and we didn't say anything about the truck to Daddy and Mama at the supper table that night, nor did I breathe one word about the puppies in the gunnysack a few weeks later. I knew it was best to keep quiet and not say too much. But I hadn't forgotten Alice. Of course, I didn't know her name was Alice but she had the kind of eyes a person didn't forget, deep and wistful in her solemn round face and there was something about them that felt strange and familiar at the same time. At our house, my mother believed in cheerfulness. She would say, "What good does crying do?" Sometimes I walked into the kitchen and the air felt dangerous, it prickled my skin, then Mama would hum hymns, her eyes

would be bright and she would press her lips into a tight smile while she scrubbed the pots or folded the clothes. She hummed songs like—"Will Your Anchor Hold in the Storms of Life?" These were the kinds of cheerful songs we sang at church twice on Sunday and every Wednesday night.

My mother was humming in the kitchen the day I looked out the kitchen window and saw Alice and her mother coming up the lane. I glanced over at Mama peeling potatoes and I was getting ready to explain when a loud rap rattled the backdoor. I peeked around Mama and the woman stuck her hand out, "I'm Dolores Higgins, ma'am, and this here is Alice. We live just down the way at the Harmon place and we thought it was high time we stopped by to say hello."

"Why, certainly," said Mama. "I'm Suzanne. Come right on in. I don't have my license anymore so I don't get down your way very often. I had no idea someone was living there. Annie?" She turned to find me standing back by the cupboards. Mama looked down at Alice and smiled, "You're just about Annie's size."

"Alice is six. She's startin' school this fall. "Annie's almost eight, said Mama. "We've lived here a year now and it will be nice to have neighbors, even if you are a few miles down the road."

After that Dolores would call at the back

screen door, "Suzanne? Anybody home?" Before you knew it, she and Alice would be sitting at the kitchen table and Dolores would be saying how terrible the heat was and how could Mama bear it, standing over the stove canning all those green beans. "I'm thinking of winter and keeping food on the table," Mama said. Dolores would reach for a dishpan of beans and start snapping them. My mother cooked and canned, washed and hung up clothes, chopped the heads off chickens and milked the goats. She had not always been this way. Sometimes I went into her bedroom where the plaque of an open Bible hung over her bed—Love your enemies. Do good to those that hate you. I dragged a chair over to the bedroom closet and lifted down the scrapbooks filled with black and white photographs of Mama, tall and slender, her hair falling in waves down to her shoulders. Her head would be tilted slightly and she would be smiling with her girlfriends, always smiling, surrounded by young men. She called the men Pax Boys. "Pax means peace," she said.

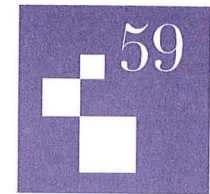
Mama was a pacifist, she had gone on a ship to Germany after World War II and we grew up with her stories, her scrapbooks and slides. I peered down at the gaunt faces in the photographs, the children with missing arms and legs. Mama lived in Germany for two years helping children find their parents, help-

ing people start over, and when she had days off, she traveled. Swiss cottages perched on mountainsides. Cold death ovens. The Eiffel Tower. Concentration camp towers. Barbed wire fences. Gondolas gliding on streets of water. It was all mixed together in her scrapbooks.

One day Mama got a strange looking letter stamped "Air Mail" and she sat quietly in the dining room reading it. It made me nervous so I hung around until Mama was ready to talk. "It's from Hans, a boy I helped 20 years ago in Germany. He can't find work and he's asking if I could send him some money." The letter had been forwarded from her parents in Virginia, the address she used when she was single and working in Europe. Mama held an old photo of Hans clutching her hand as they stood in the rubble, Mama with a faint smile and Hans serious, squinting into the camera, his legs protruding like two little sticks below his short pants and suspenders. I knew Mama had no money to send. In our house there were no birthday or Christmas presents, although sometimes Daddy brought us ice cream from Elliot's Grocery.

"I have \$1.85 saved up from pop bottle refunds. You can have it for Hans."

Mama said, "Thankyou, Annie" and she would let me know. I think she wrote back but I don't know if she ever told my father about the letter, it was almost as if she had





been a different person before she got married. And now? Well, I thought she could work on Dolores, sitting every week at our kitchen table, drinking the spearmint tea we had picked down at the creek. Dolores was a sorry case anyone could see that. Most days she wore a bright red dress that stretched across her breasts and hips and when she sat on the straight back kitchen chair her stomach stuck out like a round red ball. Her skin had an oily gleam, large black pores dotted her nose and I don't think she washed her hair, she just slicked it back and clipped it with bobby pins. But Mama never mentioned it. She was glad when Dolores came over and though she always had something in her hands to keep busy, she liked to talk and listen to Dolores' cheery laugh.

I tried to fix up Alice. I washed her hair in our bathroom sink, I pretended to be the mama so she would let me do it. "Get your head down in the sink, Alice."

"You're pushing too hard," she said. "That hurts!"

"Never mind." I crammed her head back under. "We've got to get you clean." I found an old toothbrush, put baking soda on it and showed her how to shine her teeth, and Alice looked pretty good whenever I did this. When I gave her a mirror and showed her the finished product, she smiled and turned her head from side to side but Alice didn't talk

much, not like Dolores. She watched with her big green eyes and when she was ready she would say something.

Davey and Jake would smirk and ask, "When's fat Alice comin' to play dollies?"

"Shut your big mouths," I said because Alice and I got on just fine. I wasn't used to having friends come to play at my house. When school was on, the bus picked us up at the intersection where there was an unpainted shanty that looked like an outhouse, but it was for standing in when it rained or when the wind blew. My friends were at school; I didn't bring them home.

So Alice was the first one to see my treasures. I took her to the junk pile in the cool deep woods across the cornfield and I showed her how to dig under the layers of sodden leaves to find china figurines and old bottles with thick wavy glass. The first day we found a teacup with dainty purple violets.

"Look, Alice. It only has two chips and one crack. You want it for your collection? I already have three teacups."

We found Coca-Cola bottles and carried them back to the house where we soaked them in the galvanized tub under the giant maple tree and I showed Alice how to scrub them with the bottlebrushes Mama had bought from the Fuller brush salesman. "We'll take these to Elliot's Grocery," I told Alice. "They give you money for them."

When we got tired of collecting things from the dump, we went up to the attic, on the third story of our tall gray house, where Mama had helped me set up a playhouse under the eaves. The attic was hot and musty. The heavy beams rose to a peak that ran the length of the dusky room. One white paned window stood on the level of the wooden plank floor and the light streamed in like a movie projector, the dust floated and danced in the tunnel of sunlight.

In the shadows under the beams, the oak and metal humped trunks sat covered in dust. I had checked them out and found letters and postcards scattered inside and I showed Alice how old and precious they were. "You can tell because the stamps are only one cent," I said. Mama had pushed an iron bed under the eaves and spread one of her crazy quilts on it, and I had a small table, two chairs and a big rag doll Mama made for me when Willie wouldn't let me use him for the baby anymore. Alice didn't mind being the baby and letting me be the big parent. I'd stick her in the big old baby carriage and push her around the attic.

One afternoon Alice showed up with a brown paper bag. "I gotta surprise," she said. "I'll show ya soon as we get up to the attic." We knelt by the window while she pulled out a Barbie doll dressed in a silver and gold swimming suit.

"Crumminy crickets! Where did you get that?"

"My daddy," she said.

"I don't believe you. Davey says your daddy's a low-down, mean old sucker."

Alice stuck out her chin. "My daddy gives me things if I'm good."

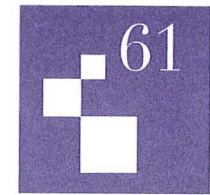
"Really?" I couldn't stop touching the doll's shiny blonde hair. "All the girls at school have Barbie dolls but my daddy says they're evil.

Jacquie has five and she was going to give me one but I'm not allowed."

We played with the Barbie doll up in the attic till we got too hot and sticky and wandered downstairs to find something to drink. I heard my mother's voice coming from the kitchen, strange and bitter, "When has crying ever gotten me anything? It only makes a person feel like dying."

"Yeah, you got that right." Dolores wiped her eyes with the back of her hand. "Feels like hell for sure."

In our house it was important to feel like we were going to heaven. Daddy and Mama loaded Dolores and Alice along with all of us kids into our VW van and headed off to the revival meetings in the big tent set up in Charlie Banks' hayfield. The poster at Elliot's Grocery promised there would be joy and the Holy Ghost and this was something I was interested in. We filed in on the sawdust floor, under the string of bulbs that hung from





the ceiling of the tent, and Alice and I sat behind Daddy and Mama and Dolores. Alice swung her short chubby legs back and forth and fidgeted on the wooden folding chair, I looked at Mama's long blonde hair wound in a French twist and Dolores' black greasy bob slicked back with bobby pins. A tall man stood on the platform and played the trumpet and the fat redheaded lady thumped away on the piano till her skin glistened with beads of sweat under the glaring lights. We all joined in and sang from the paperback books that said Revival Songs No. 6.

If there was anything that made my father happy it was music, and we sang and clapped till his face turned red with happiness. We had a piano at home that my father had bought from old Mr. Hampton and it was the pride and joy of our family. At night when my daddy was tuckered out from working in Kramerstown and doing all the chores in the barn, he'd lie down on his back on the living room floor with his hands clasped behind his head. "Now play for me, Willie, the one called 'Beautiful Dreamer.'"

Willie was six and he could hear the music in his head. He played the top notes and added the chords that went on the bottom keys. He didn't need sheet music but still my father took him to the traveling man who parked his trailer twice a month down in the parking lot by Elliot's Grocery where the area children

lined up for their piano lessons.

Dolores always asked Willie to play "Keep on the Sunny Side." She'd grin and slap her leg, "Say, son, you got the natural talent for sure!" Sometimes at night just as the sun began to fade, we would sit out on the porch swing and my father would read to us: Huckleberry Finn, By the Shores of Silver Lake. Daddy would get his guitar and we would sing from the songbooks he'd ordered from The Reader's Digest. "Day Is Dying in the West" was my favorite and Daddy would sing the words like poetry:

"Wait and worship while the night
sets her evening lamps alight
through all the sky.
Holy, Holy, Holy...."

We squeezed in beside Daddy on the porch swing and watched the sunset streaked with brilliant pink and gold. Near the field at the edge of the woods, the whip-poor-will sang while the swing creaked back and forth on its rusty chain and the crickets chirped. I wanted the holiness to stay, but it would fade and sink and the shadows would creep out of the deep woods, steal across the fields and slink into the yard.

After I crawled into bed I could hear my father's voice coming up through the iron grate, "You've ruined these children."

"You're right, Jacob, I know." My mama

talked as if she had nothing left inside her that could stand up and yell.

"I won't let you do it to him, do you hear me?"

"Yes. I hear you." If she said it soft and low with her head bowed, the danger might pass, otherwise my father would get me out of bed and I would stand there while Mama turned her back and worked at the kitchen sink.

"What's the matter with your voice, all squeaky and tight? Lower it. Lower it like this." I practiced over and over, but I could never get it right and I never knew if this would be the night for a whipping.

Daddy would send me back to bed and I heard him say, "Look what you've done. You've ruined them. I should leave you—all of you. If it wasn't for him, I would. I won't let you ruin him. This one's mine, Suzanne."

He meant Willie. It was too late for me or Davey or Jake. We were never sure how it happened that we were ruined but we knew there was hope for Willie. It was the one thing I believed with all my heart—good things would line up for Willie. I told him, "Someday you'll be famous," but he was too busy strapping on his belt and his stick gun so he could play with Davey and Jake who were always going places they weren't supposed to, falling from high branches, breaking windows. They built forts and rafts and swam in the pond where Daddy had warned them never to

go, they would sneak home wet and stinking from the slimy water and change their clothes before Daddy got back from Kramerstown where he worked at the factory. Mama never told. She'd find their smelly clothes in a pile on the dirt floor in the cellar and she'd put them through the wringer washer. I guess there was enough trouble in our house without making any more.

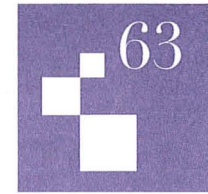
One day my brothers strolled into the yard with some garter snakes they'd found in the woods. Mr. Higgins' truck lumbered up the lane to where we stood under the shade of the maple trees and I saw the skinny man slouched down on the passenger's side, he was Dolores' brother and I never did know his name. Mr. Higgins stuck his face out and said, "Hey, boy, whatcha got there?" Willie held up his snake and before we could blink an eye, the scrawny man jumped out of the truck and took off running for the barn. Mr. Higgins roared his big brassy laugh. "Don't take much to scare that yellow-bellied son of a bitch," he said. "Scared to death of a little snake, he is."

We didn't say anything.

"Go on," he motioned to my brothers.

"Chase him and see what he does."

We stood there looking at Mr. Higgins till he laid on the horn and Dolores stuck her head out the back door and hollered, "Would you hold your dang horses!" She wasn't in any



hurry so he fixed his eyes on Alice and me. "Git on in, girl." He jerked his head toward the passenger side but Alice didn't move until Dolores came out and climbed in.

About a week later, my brothers headed for the creek and they told me to stay home, so I was glad to see Alice waving and Dolores coming up the lane. When we got inside Dolores hustled us off and said, "You girls run along now and play." She looked worried and I thought it might be a good day to go up to my bedroom and listen through the iron grate. I heard Dolores say, "The law has gone and caught up to Raymond."

"How long does he have?" Mama asked and then Alice tugged on my dress, "I wanna play in the attic with the fossil rocks."

"Dog-gone-it, Alice, I couldn't hear anything they said." I got up from the floor and followed her down the hall and up the narrow staircase to the attic.

On Saturday Mama and I were shelling lima beans on the porch. I was thinking how nice it would be to go to the same school again in the fall when the phone rang and Mama got up to answer it. She came back and said, "Go to the barn and get your father right away."

The next thing you know, Mama, Daddy and I piled into the VW van and drove down the road to see Dolores and Alice. Jake and Davey and Willie were nowhere in sight so we left them behind.

"The guards found him this morning," Mama said.

We had driven by the Higgins' house before, but my Daddy had told me he would tan my hide if I ever stepped one blessed foot into that yard by myself. The small house was covered with brown fake brick shingles, the front porch sagged and rusted farm equipment and junked cars sat in the tall grass and weeds. A couple of old sheds and a rickety smokehouse leaned at precarious angles and further back the roof of the weathered barn had collapsed. We drove up the lane and my father turned to me, "Annie, when we get in that house I don't want to see you turning up your nose. If Dolores gives you something to eat, you take it and say, Thankyou. You hear me?" "Yes, sir." I don't know why he said that because I never turned up my nose or made a fuss.

When we got out of the van, two scabby hounds bounded out the front screen door, howling and carrying on and I saw Alice's uncle slink around the side of the house and head off behind one of the sheds. We walked up the porch steps real careful so we wouldn't trip on the loose boards.

I couldn't see anything at first until my eyes got used to the dim light but then I saw heaps of clothes on chairs and boxes along the walls. Old magazines and newspapers were scattered on the floor and there were stacks of junk

piled higher than my head. It was like walking through a maze—lamps and broken chairs and cracked teapots with dead geraniums, a Barbie doll without a head. It was better than the dump in the woods and I wanted to see what all was sticking out from behind the couch when Dolores said, “They found him hangin’ from a bed sheet. It was his first night in prison.”

Mama lifted two scrawny cats and some dirty pans off a chair so she could sit down at the table beside Dolores. Dolores wasn’t crying; she looked blank.

“They cut him down but it was too late. They should have been watchin’ him.” My father reached over and patted Dolores on the shoulder. Dolores kept stirring her coffee and saying, “Why weren’t they watchin’ him?” I couldn’t figure out why everyone wasn’t grateful or why Alice was standing over in the corner looking down at her feet. I thought, First night in prison and he up and kills himself—how handy could that be? No, I couldn’t work up any sadness for Dolores and Alice.

“You girls go outside,” Daddy said. “Go on.” We checked out the rusted bedsprings by the side of the porch and a couple of whiskey barrels. I thought we might explore the junked cars but when I saw Alice’s uncle sitting in one, sullen and glaring, I said, “How about we look for fossils along the road?”

Alice liked hunting for fossils and she was getting pretty good at it so we walked along the ditch and “Crumminy crickets!” I yelled. “Look at this rock!” It was a mass of shells, slender imprints that looked like bird feet and little round creatures with tiny legs.

“See,” I told Alice. “They all got stuck in the mud. They were trying to move their feet but they turned into a rock and froze up that way.” I knew right off I would love that rock more than anything I owned and when everyone was ready to leave, I held it in my lap all the way home.

The next time Alice dropped by, I said, “Come on. I’ll show you where I keep my best find ever.”

I had lined the rock up by the attic window so I could examine the strange fossils and imprints in the light. I let Alice hold it and she agreed it was a beautiful specimen. We opened the trunks and got out the postcards and looked at the old stamps: one cents, two cents. Stamps were five cents now and I explained this again to Alice so she would know the postcards were precious and valuable and that we must handle them gently.

After awhile we got tired of the postcards and started to play house. Alice crawled up on the bed because she was the baby and I was always the big parent. She wiggled and sang a little song and I thought to myself, She has forgotten her mean daddy and that is a mighty fine

thing.

"Alice, you are certainly a lucky girl. Where's your Barbie? We can play shopping and I'll buy you a Barbie doll if you're good."

We traveled around the attic and I pushed Alice in the baby carriage. "OK, now we're home and it's time for your nap. Get in bed." She crawled up and I pushed her down on the bed and put the quilt over her.

"I don't wanna sleep. I wanna see the fossil rock."

"No, Alice, not now. Go to sleep."

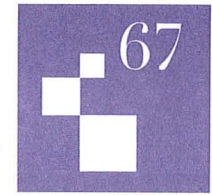
She pushed the crazy quilt off, climbed down from the bed and ran over to the window to check out the fossils.

"No, Alice! Get back in the bed. I'm the parent, you have to listen!"

I warned her, but she had forgotten she was supposed to be the baby so I beat her. I smacked her on the back, grabbed her arm and dragged her over to the bed. I shoved her under the covers and she cowered and whimpered, but I punched her over and over until her wide green eyes filled up with fear and I knew I had gotten it right.

Second Place Short Story

Fish Tales



Years of deep wrinkles etched fishing tales across his weathered face. Although he was in his seventies, his hair still held the faint red of his youth. His hands calloused and freckled by the sun, meticulously prepared fishing lines, reels, hooks and bait. Today was the day. He knew it. The trout that was the talk of local legends would be his. This time he would be ready.

Standing outside his work shed, he watched the sun slowly rise above the horizon, casting golden reflections across the lake. Staring at a distant corner of the rippling water, he sipped his coffee. "That's the spot," he murmured to himself. Underneath the dipping pines, the trophy that eluded him for years lay in the murky shadows. He continued staring at the rippling pond, slowly sipping his coffee. Morning doves cooed softly from the meandering arrangement of birch and maple trees. The stillness of the forest assured him of his victory. He took a final gulp of his thick black coffee; it was time to retrieve his trophy.

Gathering his fishing gear, he walked back towards the house. Entering the kitchen quietly, trying not to disturb his sleeping wife, he placed the tackle box and poles on the table. Reaching for the coffee pot, he was abruptly interrupted by a his wife's shrill

voice: "Jerry" she called out. "You didn't bring that tackle into my kitchen, did you?"

In a panic, he spilled coffee on his green fishing vest and kitchen counter. "No, no dear. I left it out side. Don't worry, just go back to bed. I was just getting ready to leave." He quickly mopped up the spilled coffee.

"Do you need me to pack extra clothes in case you get wet?" she asked.

"No!" he replied in a huff. He thought he heard a giggle as his wife moved back to bed. Moving his gear into the front room, out of earshot from his wife, a young boy with a shock of red hair and a face full of matching freckles stumbled sleepily into the kitchen. Rubbing his mischievous brown eyes, the boy released a suspiciously fake cough.

"Shouldn't you be getting ready for school?" the man sternly asked. The boy crinkled his brow, crunching his freckles tightly together and placed one hand on his throat and the other on his stomach.

"I don't feel so good, grandpa," the boy responded. "I would hate to miss a day of school, but I should probably stay home."

The man raised a single eyebrow at his grandson and shook his head. Ignoring the boy's plea, the man grunted,

"Maybe you shouldn't stay up all night playing video games and eating junk

Heather Wright

food. You'd think a boy your age would have better things to do. Get dressed or you'll miss the bus. And I'm not giving you a ride this morning."

With a pouting sigh, the boy plopped down on the overstuffed chair decorated in a fishing lures. He caught sight of the neatly packed fishing gear. Holding his stomach absently, but with a gleam in his eyes, he shyly asked his grandfather, "Are you going after him, again?"

"I've got a feeling today's the day I'll mount that fish on my wall." His expression was proud, while locking his eyes on the empty space above the mantel.

The boy followed his grandfather's gaze and like a small mouse sneaking through a crack in the wall, he coyly responded "Didn't he get away from you last year because you were alone and fell off the boat?"

The man winced and jerked his shoulders. "Yes," he grumbled under a heavy breath. "And I didn't fall. That sucker pulled me off the boat. I nearly drowned trying to catch him"

The boy playfully nodded and scratched his head of poker red hair. The bright freckles blurring his sneaking facial expressions.

"Grandpa, last week when you went out alone didn't you drop your net in the water just before you scooped him up?" The boy, not waiting for an answer continued, "I bet if you had a fish'n partner that wouldn't have happened."

The man's face heated up, flushing as red as the boy's hair. Staring directly at his

grandson he responded, "I didn't drop the net. That fish pulled it right out of my hands."

"If it wasn't for that net," the boy pushed on, "that ole fish would be mounted on the wall. Too bad you didn't have a fish'n buddy. I guess your friends will just keep talking about the one that got away."

Thinking of yet another year of jokes passed around the poker table, the man clenched and unclenched his fists. That fish had made him the laughing stock of the town. Each failed fishing excursion made its way into the town's gossip circle. The store clerk, the gas attendant, friends and neighbors all giggled behind his back. He thought he even heard his own wife chuckling over one of the fishing tales. But not this time, that fish would pay. Before he could hotly scold his grandson and shuffle him off to school, the man paused. His grandson had a point. Two hands are better than one. He could certainly hold the net and steady the boat. At the very least his grandson could vouch for the existence of the monstrous fish.

The little guy was probably playing sick so he could help me catch that fish and save my reputation the man silently thought. The older man cleared his throat, "You aren't looking so well today, a little green. You probably shouldn't go to school"

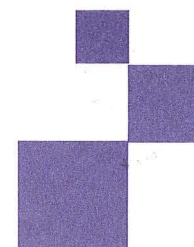
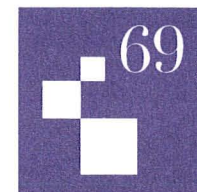
The boy eagerly watched his grandfather call the school and report him sick. A small smiled cracked the corner of the boy's face.

"What do you say, you go get dressed and I'll load the fishing gear," the man warmly

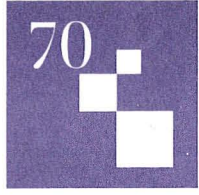
smiled at his grandson.

“Oh no grandpa,” the boy expelled a fake cough, “I couldn’t possibly do that! I’m sick. You said I look a little green. I’ll just spend the day in my room, resting and maybe playing some video games.”

The boy scooted from the table and slowly strolled down the hall, to his room. Shaking his head, the old man thought who was trickier at throwing him off the boat, his grandson or the fish?

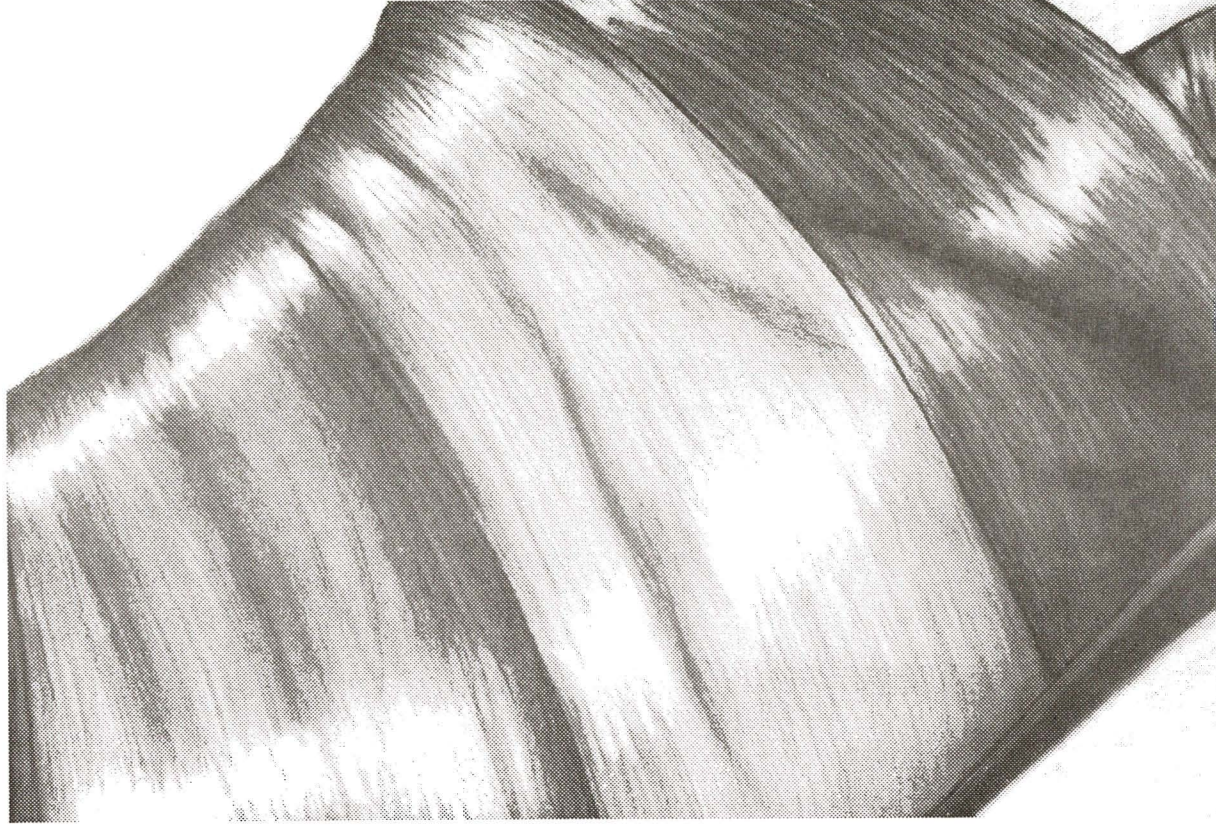


Gabrielle House

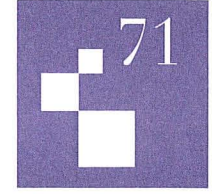


Selection of Merit

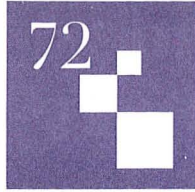
She's a Dancer



Selection of Merit
She's a Dancer



Gabrielle House



Amy Clark

Richard J. Colwell

short story award

Queen-Sized

The Colwell Award is given each year to the work of fiction which distinguishes itself in terms of creativity and artistic innovation. This year's winner, "Queen-Sized," is very satisfying technically. The title is perfect. The plotting is excellent. Details of warmth snugly envelope the middle section with its glimpse of the cold end to a relationship, and the writer succeeds in surprising the reader even while preparing for the conclusion with appropriate details.

Amanda sits flipping through the channels on her cozy over-sized couch. With a sigh, she blows a strand of hair from her face as she flips passed "The Real World," "Days of Our Lives," and "The Maury Show." I have seen enough drama for one day. Dropping the remote on the floor, she looks at her left hand. She slowly touches her bare finger. Closing her eyes, she breathes in the cool winter air. Shivering, she pulls her fluffy blanket higher towards her neck. Hugging it close to her chest, she attempts to fend off the frigid night air.

A noise from the other room breaks the silence. She listens intently, but without the slightest hint of alarm. The door creaks shrilly as it is closed. Despite the intruder's entrance, Amanda remains on the couch beneath her snug haven.

Upon entering the house, Adam kicks his old worn-out boots next to a pair of dressy flats, placed neatly in a line against the wall. When passing the dining room, he glances quickly at the half melted candles

on the dining room table. Without thinking very much about them, he trudges into the television room in hopes of finding something decent on T.V. to fall asleep to.

As he rounds the corner he hears a small voice from the couch on which he had planned to rest.

"Hi, honey. Where have you been?"

"I was just at Dylan's house." He replies, slouching instead on an old Lazy Boy.

"Did you two have fun?"

"Sure."

"Well, what did you guys end up doing?"

"Oh you know. We just hung out," he says, tossing his baseball cap onto the floor next to him.

"What time did you go over to see him?" she asks sitting up to look at him.

"I've been over there since I left this morning."

"Oh, but I thought you had to work this morning," she says with a slight hesitation. "I assumed you were coming home sooner."

"Did I say that? He asks while grabbing at the cat's tail next to his chair, waking it from its

peaceful sleep. "Well, Dylan needed my help with something at his house," he adds in short spurts while still picking and laughing at the aloof kitten.

"What did you help him do?"

Pausing, he looks at her, "Why do you keep asking so many questions? You act as if you don't trust me."

"Well, sure I trust you. I was trying to have a conversation with you. I just wanted to know how your day was."

"It was good." Looking her in her eyes for the first time that night, Adam quickly adds, "I helped him fix his heater."

"That was nice of you. What made you decide to help him?"

"He's my friend. Can't I do something nice for a friend?" he asks accusingly as he throws himself back into his recliner, flipping the foot rest out to plop his legs on.

"Well, of course you can. I never said you couldn't," she adds in her soft voice and looks down at her hands once again. She begins to caress the palm of her hand softly with her fingertips, rounding to touch the back of each knuckle.

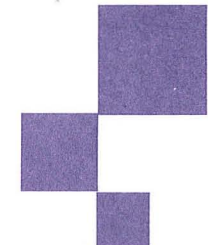
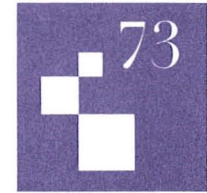
"Honey, could you get me my sweater out of your truck?" she asks without looking up at him.

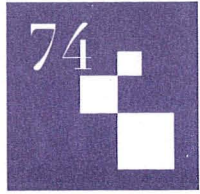
"What? You have two legs! Get it yourself."

Amanda continues to look down at her hands. Seeing her blank response, Adam quickly says, "It is pretty damn cold in here. I'll get your sweater. I have to go get my beer I left out there anyway."

As Adam walks back up the steps with the sweater thrown over his shoulder and his beer in hand, he is careful to avoid the patches of ice sporadically covering parts of the sidewalk. Rubbing his unoccupied hand against his fleece sweater, he attempts to warm it. Reaching the door, he turns the knob only to discover that it refuses to budge.

Amanda cuddles close to feather-filled pillows and inviting blankets on her queen-sized bed. Ignoring the muffled bangs of the front door, she closes her eyes to ponder this name. Smirking, she realizes just how well the name fits.





Selection of Merit

Another Round

He glanced through the yellow haze of smoke at the Budweiser clock behind the bar. The hands were approaching midnight. Reaching across the bar, he crushed out his cigarette in a half empty ashtray. He listened to the band blast out the latest rock-n-roll tunes and took the last sip of his beer. The pounding sensation of the bass and drums rumbled in his head. The noise level was growing to a steady roar, as the local scene filed past the bar's door. Hoards of young bucks howled at the girls squeezed into tight fitting jeans. Massaging his temples and muttering to the empty beer bottle, "Jesus, I should have left hours ago."

Members of the Friday night bar scene ignored his middle aged body slumped on the bar stool. Looking around, he muttered, "Jesus." Usually he left the bar by nine or ten before the rowdiness started. He had only remained in a defiant protest, while she left hours ago. Drumming his fingers across the bar, what's wrong with her lately? She makes a scene at the bar, embarrassing me and then storms out! Quickly lighting up another cigarette and mumbling under his breath, "I'll stay out all night." A smirk ran

across his face.

"Hey, Jim," the bartender yelled down to him. "Do you want another beer?"

"Yeah, I'll take one more." The noise and warm beer were souring his stomach, but he refused to leave. He would make a point to her. Taking a drag from his cigarette, he returned to hours earlier in the evening.

* * *

Persuading her to meet him for a couple of drinks had not been easy. He called her from the bar, where he sat perched since getting off work early at two. She gave him a hundred reasons why he should come home, the apartment was a disaster, the laundry was piling up, bills needed to be paid, and she had tons of homework.

He pleaded with her over the phone from the bar, "Come on baby, just a couple of drinks. That stuff can wait. Please?"

"You always say that stuff can wait. I'm really tired. Can't you just come home for a change?" she murmured into the receiver.

"Just a couple of drinks, we haven't been out in a long time. I'll meet you when I get off work at five," he said.

Silence, she asked, "I thought you got off work early today?"

"No, not today," he quickly responded. "Just meet me Tricia, for a couple of drinks, please?"

"Fine," she replied and hung up. He returned to his barstool and ordered another drink.

It was six o'clock before she met him. Wearing a pair of his worn out jeans and grungy sweatshirt, she plopped on the barstool next to him. Auburn strands of hair hung limply around her face. Her lips were smudged with a tawdry red, deepening the bleak contrast with the rest of her unpainted face.

Studying her, he thought, God, at least she wore some make-up. "Hey Tricia," he kissed her cheek. "How was your day, babe? What do you want to drink?"

"Just a beer," she reached for her cigarettes. "Jim, let's not make this a late night, okay. We've got a pile of stuff waiting at the house."

They continued a trifling conversation, slipping into a third round of drinks, before she began getting edgy. She wrapped herself tightly on the barstool and recoiled into her sweatshirt. He reached over and crushed out his cigarette in the overflowing ashtray. Immediately lighting up another one, he glanced at her smugly and tossed the lighter towards her.

Without looking at her, he asked, "Do you want another round?"

She shrugged her shoulders and focusing her attention elsewhere responded, "If you want to stick around, go ahead. It doesn't matter to me."

He signaled the bartender with a quick snap of his hand. Taking a short hit from his smoke, "Bring us two more."

"Ask the bartender to take care of this," Tricia turned sharply towards him, pointing to the overflowing ashtray.

"You're partly to blame," the words slipped across his tongue. "You smoke just as much as I do," he paused, "when we're out."

She let his words hang in the air. Lighting up a cigarette and blowing cool smoke in his direction, she carelessly flipped the lighter on to the bar.

Turning away from him, she replied, "Did I blame anyone?"

The bartender returned with a fresh round of drinks and left the overflowing ashtray on the bar. Jim took a long, hard swallow of his beer.

"The drinks in here are always warm," he mumbled, "but they're cheap."

Her sharp brown eyes were locked on the ashtray, filled with snubbed out butts. Quickly running her hand through her limp hair, one thing, she thought, I ask him for one thing.

Jim continued grumbling about the quality of his drink, before following her stare. He reached across the counter and crushed out his cigarette in the ashtray.

"The service in here really sucks, doesn't it?" he quietly ripped. "The drinks are really weak."

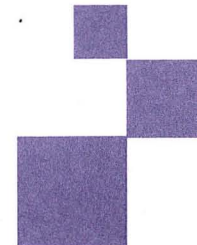
Cracking a pointed smile she replied, "You have no idea," and dumped the ashtray on the bar, almost knocking over the barstool as she stormed out of the bar.

* * *

The pulsating music snapped Jim back. The sickening feeling in his stomach was getting stronger and his head was throbbing. He looked at the clock: quarter after twelve. The ringing in his ears was growing and he rubbed his throbbing temples. Maybe I should go home now.

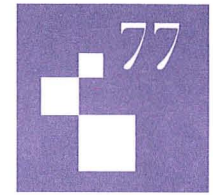
The noise was a dizzying roar. Jim felt someone push into his back. Looking over, Tricia was squeezing in next to him. She had slipped her hair into a ponytail. A few greasy strands escaped the rubber band and stuck to her face. Traces of the tawdry red lipstick stained the corners of her lips. Twirling an unlit cigarette between her fingers, she locked onto him with her glazed brown eyes.

"Ready for the another round?" he asked.



Selection of Merit

Tales of Blarney



Beth sipped her tea as she sat on the brocade chair in the sunny parlor. She was groggy from a late night of partying with friends at college. This tea was just the tonic she needed to soothe her aching head. As she drank, Beth peered through the lace curtains of the front window that overlooked the main street of the tiny village where she grew up. Beth made the trip from Ann Arbor to her parent's home in her rusty red Ford Pinto earlier that day. After lugging her duffel bag up the back porch steps, the aroma of soup simmering on the stove hit her as soon as she opened the kitchen door. Her stomach rumbled. The only sustenance she'd had so far that morning was a giant Styrofoam cup of black coffee.

"Mom, it's me," Beth called. She looked out the kitchen window where she spotted her Father tromping around the barnyard with her dog, Sally, hot on his heels.

"Honey, it's so good to have you home." Her mother locked her in a tight embrace. Beth looked around the kitchen. "Mom, what have you got to eat? I'm starved. I've also got some laundry I need to get done before I go back tomorrow."

"I'll make you a sandwich. I can get your wash started this afternoon." Her mother began rummaging in the refrigerator and

the cupboards. Beth ran out to her car to retrieve the bag of dirty clothes. When she returned, her Mom was layering slices of ham and cheese on homemade bread. She turned to Beth and said, "I'm glad you decided to interview Mrs. O'Brien for your journalism assignment. Her mind is still sharp as a tack. She'll have some wonderful stories for you to use for your project."

"How old would she be now, Mom?" Beth inquired as she opened the refrigerator door, taking stock of its contents.

"Oh, my goodness, Moira has to be 91 or 92. Her husband died about ten years ago. She is one of the very last of the Irish immigrants that settled in this town."

"And she still lives all alone? That's amazing."

"It sure is. Can you recall when Gram, Moira and some of the other ladies would be playing cards at the table here, laughing and telling their tales?"

"You know, I can vaguely recall it. I do remember the stories were weird and kind of freaked me out, being just a little kid. I do have a couple of other old folks I plan on interviewing too. My friend Karen's grandpa is quite a character. He grew up in Detroit, and Karen says he has lots of funny tales to tell. When you first suggested I interview

Christine Ryan Sass

Mrs. O'Brien I wasn't so sure. Since I've been away at college, I've kind of gotten away from all this quaint, small town stuff I grew up with."

"For instance?" inquired her Mother, placing a sandwich in front of Beth and sitting down beside her at the kitchen table

Beth chomped on a dill pickle as she answered, "Like all those corny St. Patrick's Day banquets you made me go to with the silly Irish songs, funny hats and weird dancing. I also remember hearing about the old guys who would sit uptown at the bar and tell goofy legends as though they were the gospel truth."

Beth's mother smiled and said, "You know, the Irish swear on the souls of their dearly departed relatives that those legends are true. Why did you decide to interview Mrs. O'Brien if all this is so foolish?"

"The angle I'm going to take is how sophisticated society has become compared to the olden days, when people were so gullible and their big entertainment was sitting around spinning yarns."

Her Mother looked at her thoughtfully.

"What time did you tell her you'd be over?"

Beth glanced at her watch and said, "I've got just enough time for a couple of those chocolate chip cookies over there and a huge glass of milk."

Resting her head on the back of the chair, Beth surveyed the parlor. Ornate antiques filled the small room. Beth got up from her comfortable perch to get a closer look at the pictures that adorned one entire wall of the

parlor. A tintype of a bride sitting in a chair and her groom standing ramrod straight beside her was in the center of the grouping of photos.

Mrs. O'Brien trotted through the dining room and into the parlor. She was wearing a white apron that covered most of her dark blue dress. She set a plate of scones down on a cherry wood end table. She turned to Beth, who was looking intently at the tintype, and said, "That is my husband and me on our wedding day. It was taken in Tralee right after the ceremony at St. Joseph's Church."

Mrs. O'Brien was misty eyed as she pointed out relatives and friends in the other pictures that graced her wall.

Beth returned to her chair and Mrs. O'Brien sat in a rocker directly across from her.

The elderly woman smoothed the folds of her dress across her knees. She took a crisp napkin and shook it out onto her lap. Her wispy grey hair was falling out of the bun that was trying to contain it as little tendrils framed her rosy, round face.

"Could you tell me about some of the yarns you and my Grandma would spin when you got together? I was just a little girl and can only remember bits and pieces," Beth asked as she crossed one jean clad leg over the other and set her writing tablet and pen in her lap. As Mrs. O'Brien poured herself a cup of tea from the shiny silver teapot, she peered over her wire rim glasses and replied, "Tall tales, is it? Your sainted Grandmother would beg to differ." She set her cup down and clasped her hands together on her lap meeting Beth's eyes

with a steady gaze.

Afternoon sunlight poured in through the window making the room quite warm, so Beth took off her denim jacket. She leaned forward, trying not to grin at the old woman's indignation, as she said, "Well, those old tales were probably more believable fifty years ago, but seem a little hokey in 1974."

Mrs. O'Brien harrumphed, "Well, missy, let me start with an occurrence I witnessed my own self right here at this very house." Beth nibbled on a scone as Mrs. O'Brien began. "T'was a rainy night in late October and Mr. O'Brien, God rest his soul, was down the street at Jimmy Flaherty's Pub for a pint or two. I went out on the porch to hunt for my cat when I saw them."

"Saw what?" asked Beth curiously.

"Why, the headless horsemen, of course."

Replied Mrs. O'Brien matter-of-factly.

Beth thought she might choke on a piece of scone and took a quick sip of tea.

"They are called the Dullahan in Ireland. It had started to rain, so at first I thought I heard thunder, but when they came into view I could tell the noise was from the clattering of their hoofs. An eerie wailing could be heard as they neared the house. There were probably six of them and each rider was without his head, it being tucked under his arm, and they were brandishing swords. I stood there in utter amazement as I watched them ride up the street and into town, and then disappear into the

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"Mrs. O'Brien, I certainly mean no disrespect, but that's kind of hard to believe. The Irish are known for their vivid imaginations, aren't they? Maybe you had fallen asleep while waiting for your husband to come home and dreamt the whole thing?" Mrs. O'Brien crossly replied, "My dress was soaked that night from standing out in the rain watching the unearthly sight. My tabby hid under the porch and wouldn't come out for an entire day."

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"Why, the horsemen set out riding to seek revenge, to right a wrong. I pity the poor soul who would suffer at their hand." Mrs. O'Brien woefully shook her head as she leaned over and poured more tea into her cup. She offered a refill to Beth who was squirming in her chair.

Beth flipped to a fresh page in her notebook.

"A story I do remember my Gram telling was about a wake and a coffin falling out of a hearse?"

"Oh Lord, yes. It was the wake of Billy Murphy's dear mother, Bridget. The Murphy family lived over on Kelly Road and her wake was held in the parlor, of course. Well, Billy was beside himself with grief so he and his cronies started with the whiskey in the early afternoon. They were to keep vigil all night over his beloved mother. Poor Mrs. Murphy

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After hearing a few more similar accounts, Beth noted the late afternoon sun began to cast eerie shadows in the once sunny parlor. She glanced at her watch and was shocked to discover she had been there for over three hours.

"I really must be going now, Mrs. O'Brien. I told my Mom I'd be home for supper," Beth said as she fished around in her purse for her car keys. "Thank you so much for your time. This has been quite an afternoon. I've got a lot of material for my assignment."

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"Great, Mrs. O'Brien is a sweetheart. Wait 'till you hear what we talked about. Also, I want you to tell me what Gram thought

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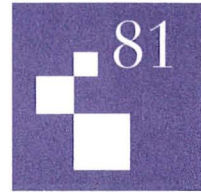
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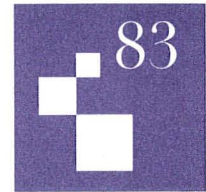
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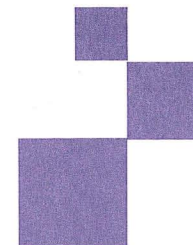
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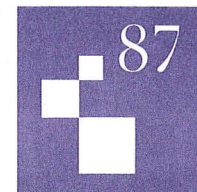
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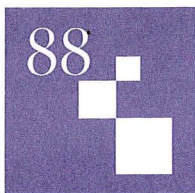


Selection of Merit

Abstract Leaf



Jessica Keys



Selection of Merit

The Truth Stinks

Warm smells of roasting turkey and chestnut stuffing filled the kitchen. The windows began to steam up from the heat of the oven, while Dean Martin cooed from a small radio perched above the refrigerator, "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas." Plates of festive cookies, trays of various pickles and tiny chunks cubed cheese decorated the counter tops. Potatoes boiled on the stove, while a woman bent over the open oven poked and prodded at the turkey. She wore a green apron covered with little prints of Santa and reindeer. Her grey hair was cropped short and earrings in the shape of Christmas ornaments dangled from her ears. A younger woman sat on a kitchen stool, she picked at the small cubes of cheese. The tight grey turtleneck and faded jeans were a dark contrast to the surrounding holiday scenery. Dusty blonde hair balanced on her shoulders. A black terrier persistently whined at her feet. Refusing to be ignored, the dog begged for food. The younger woman pushed the dog away with her leg, and quietly snipped, "Go away, Peaches." The older woman raised eyebrow to the scolding and Peaches remained begging at the foot of the stool.

"Ma," the younger woman pleaded. "Open a window. It's roasting in here."

Returning the turkey to the oven, Beatrice replied, "Janice, your father doesn't like drafts in the house. He gets a chill. Isn't that right dear?" She called to the man reading the paper in the adjoining family room. Colorful lights flicked on and off from the oversized Christmas tree next to his chair.

Without looking up Bill responded "Yes, dear."

Janice rolled her eyes, while her mother continued, "Janice, your sister will be here any minute with the boys. Don't start filling up on cheese, save some room for dinner."

Shrugging her shoulders, Janice tossed the piece of cheese to the dog.

"You girls don't see enough of each other.

It will be so nice for the two of you to talk.

Maybe you could ask her..."

"Mother," Janice interrupted, "I'm not asking my little sister anything. I'm fine."

"I'm just trying to be helpful," Bea protested while rearranging the placement of the cookies. "Darlene and Paul are so successful and I thought fresh from your divorce, you

could use some help."

Nibbling on a pickle, Janice quietly mumbled, "Why do I even bother to come?"

Pulling a gallon of eggnog from the fridge, Bea continued, "I wish you and Dave could have worked things out. Maybe if you two had started a family, your marriage would have been different. Dave was a good man," she sighed. "Now Darlene and Paul, they're content with a family. They have a solid marriage. Your father and I set the example, isn't that right dear?"

Flicking his news paper, he mumbled, "Yes, dear." Janice twirled a strand of hair tightly around her finger.

Bea poured the eggnog into little Santa mugs with rosy cheeks and smiling faces. From under the counter she pulled out a bottle of rum and added a shot for her and Janice.

"You'd better make mine two," Janice motioned to the rum. "And Ma, I've been divorced for almost two years. It's old news." Pouring a tad more rum into each mug, she replied, "It's just that I worry about you." Softly smiling and patting her daughter's hand. "You are getting older and with no end in sight. Won't you let your sister help you with...?"

"Ma, drop it," her jaw tightened up. "Don't embarrass me in front of Darlene and Mr. Macho man, okay."

Sipping her laced eggnog, Bea scolded. "Don't

make fun your brother in law. Have more respect. He's good man and takes care of your sister. She doesn't have to work and can stay home like I did." A smile warmed the corners of her lips.

"He's about as exciting as a box of hammers," Janice hummed.

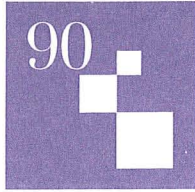
"And about as smart," Bill piped from behind his newspaper.

"That's enough," Bea prepared to scold them, but was interrupted by the sound of crunching tires in the driveway. "Oh, my little angels are here!" She excitedly ran to the front door. Barking and yapping, Peaches went trailing behind her.

The door flung open and two wild eyed boys flew past their grandmother and dove for the gifts under the trees.

"Boys!" Darlene stumbled into the house, her arms full of wrapped packages and almost tripping over Peaches. "Get over here and say hello to your grandma." The boys ignored her. Paul strolled in, carrying a covered cake dish. He shoved the cake dish towards Darlene before she had a chance to set the packages down. He grunted his hellos and the plopped on the couch, flicking on the T.V.

"Oh, boys will be boys," Bea happily fussed over her grandsons and Paul, taking their coats and dishing out cookies. Peaches kept her distance, growling at the boys' rambunctious voices. Bea and Bill were preoccupied with



their grandsons while Darlene dished more presents under the tree. Paul remained planted on the couch. The conversation focused on the boys and plans for the new year. Janice left the room to refill her happy Santa mug. After finishing her second double-rum laced eggnog, Janice murmured to the empty Santa's mug, "Time for a smoke," and grabbed her coat.

Outside the cold air was bit at her face and hands. The cold air cooled her lungs as she took a deep breath. Freedom, she thought. Walking to her whale of a car that was about to turn into her smoking lounge. The grass was crisp under her boots and then there was a squish. Dog shit, she thought. I stepped in dog shit. Great. Doing her best, she scraped the doggie remains on the edge of the car door frame, but even the lit cigarette could not cover the pungent odor as she sat there smoking.

There was a knock on her car door. Her sister was shivering outside. "Can I have a smoke?" she asked.

"Come on in," Janice opened the door for her. "I thought you quit smoking because of Paul?" She accented the last syllable. Darlene rolled her eyes and lit up.

Janice cleared her throat, "Darlene, can I ask you something? Mom thought maybe you could help me with..."

But, Darlene interrupted, "When you left

Dave, how did it feel?"

"Good, I guess. I was relieved that it was all over. But I need to ask you..."

Darlene's voice cracked "You're so lucky Janice; you didn't have kids. It just makes it harder. God, I think I'm turning out like mom. I don't know what to do; my whole life feels like a joke. My marriage stinks, my kids walk all over me. My life's a mess. I want to leave, but please don't tell mom or anyone. I need time to think things out." They sat and smoked, staring at the Christmas lights trimmed across the house. Darlene took a deep breath and spurted out, "What's that smell?"

"When you smell shit, you're closer to the truth," Janice replied. They remained in the car smoking.

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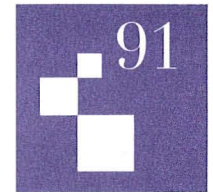
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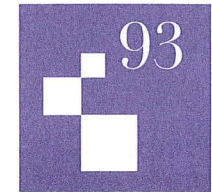
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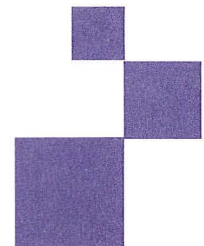
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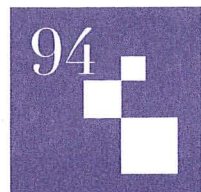
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The theme of this year's issue of Patterns is *creativity defined*, presenting award-winning student illustrations of art and design and expressions of the power of creative writing.

Special thanks to the artists and authors within these pages and, of course, to the faculty who have helped us "learn to see" the world around us by expressing ourselves through writing, art and design. Thanks for inspiring and challenging us to be our creative best. It was a challenging and rewarding experience to design this edition of Patterns. We specially thank SC4 and our Friends of the Arts for helping to make the 47th edition of Patterns creative writing & art magazine a big success!

Kelly Bright
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